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# Conflict, Community and Catholic Restoration

The parish of St James in Ghent between 1560 and  
1600

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Proefschrift voorgelegd tot het behalen van de graad van Doctor in de Geschiedenis  
2020





## Preface

Almost 10 years ago I started working on a FWO-project entitled “*The Church in the Middle. An inquiry into the urban parish and parish church in the Southern Low Countries (ca. 1450-1700)*”. I still remember vividly one of the remarks of a more experienced researcher after the presentation of the project in a first workshop. She told me that untangling urban religious life was a very, very difficult, if not impossible endeavour. She referred to the numerous components of urban parishes, explaining how politics, economics, social and religious developments overlap and interact with each other constantly, making urban life hard to grasp. I did not really understand her concern then.

The subject proved hard to tackle in the following years and some of my own traits such as having broad interests, being not very organized and indecisiveness did not help. However, after some archival research I discovered interesting evolutions that deepened my passion for the subject. This helped me limit my research to the reaction of the parish of St James to the Troubles of the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. I could continue a fifth year of research thanks to the funding of the IUAP for the project ‘*City & Society in the Low Countries. 1200-1850*’. After that phase, the thesis was combined with other work and life projects outside of Ghent University. I never expected it would have taken me this long, but here it is.

I would like to thank the people behind FWO and the IUAP for arranging the funding that enabled me to start the work on this project. I thank Ghent University for the administrative and logistical help I received during the process of researching and writing this doctoral thesis. I thank warmly my promoters Anne-Laure Van Bruaene and Guido Marnef for their advice, support and most of all, endless patience. Many people have made that I will keep fond memories of these researching years, (especially the first ones). To my direct colleagues, of the *landschapsbureau* and further down the hall, thank you for your friendship. Academic research can be a hard and lonely business at times, our moments together, even in the Brug, were always pleasant. Many thanks to the following people who have helped me with my research or the coming about of this thesis in concrete ways: Sabrina Corbellini and team for the inspirational workshops in the context of the COST-project “New Communities of Interpretation”, Susie Sutch for the translations, corrections, and so much more, Ruben Suykerbuyk for

sending me articles and answering all my questions, Sebastiaan Leenknecht for the 3D-drawings, Nirmala Patel for proofreading and correcting the English and for your patience and flexibility and Hans Blomme for the map of St James. I am grateful for all others who have aided and influenced me through their advice and comments during talks, workshops and conferences. Final thanks go to my family for their caring support and to God who keeps me strong in the midst of the storm.

## List of Abbreviations

WNT	Woordenboek der Nederlandse Taal
MVV	Marc Van Vaernewijck, <i>Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568</i> , ed. Ferdinand François Ernest Van Der Haeghen, MVB 4 (Gent: Annoot-Braeckman, 1872)
SAG	Stadsarchief Gent (City Archives Ghent)
RAG	Rijksarchief Gent (State Archives Ghent)
OKA	Oud archief van de kerkfabriek en parochie
S-D	Jozef Scheerder, 'Documenten in verband met confiscatie van roerende goederen van hervormingsgezinden te Gent (1567-1568)', <i>Bulletin de la Commission Royale d'Histoire</i> , 157 (1991)
S-W	Jozef Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Catholic University of Louvain, 1971)
V	Verheyden, <i>Het Gentse Martyrologium (1530-1595)</i> .
fo	folio
ro	recto
vo	verso





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# Introduction

## The parish and the Counter-Reformation: debates and questions

Wij hebben emmer alle in veel dijnghe gheblentpott<sup>1</sup>, daerom es somtijts de ketterie ghoet, want zij doet de waerheijt ende scriftuere onderzoucken ende an den dach brijnghe. [...] Een recht hijstoriescrijvere zal de oorzaken der dijnghe alzo wel vertellen, als een goet cijrurgien de wonden totten gronde tinten zal. Wat fraeijer of lustigher dan die oorzaken ende circonstantiente hooren!<sup>2</sup>

Having just witnessed a violent wave of iconoclasm (1566) sweeping through his home town of Ghent, the Catholic author Marcus Van Vaernewijck was heartbroken. Yet the account he left behind reveals that he also sought to understand what exactly had happened. How had Protestant heresy been able to rise and spread so quickly, destroying the traditional religious landscape in just a few years? What were the circumstances that had made this possible? Vaernewijck found comfort in the idea that the challenge of Protestantism and iconoclasm would force Catholicism to change. The traditional faith would be purified, be better informed and brought closer to the truth.

Catholic reform in the local context of the city of Ghent is at the heart of the following chapters. In particular, the role of ordinary parishioners in early modern Catholicism is investigated. An analysis at the level of the parish enables a different kind of study on the well-debated subject of the Counter-Reformation. Not only was the parish an (ecclesiastical) institution linked to a specific territory and a church building, it was also

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<sup>1</sup> Being in the dark, blindfolded, See Woordenboek der Nederlandse Taal (WNT) : <http://wnt.inl.nl/iWDB/search?actie=article&wdb=WNT&id=M009437&lemma=blindpotten&domein=0&conc=true> , consulted on 20/10/19.

<sup>2</sup> Marc Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, ed. Ferdinand François Ernest Van Der Haeghen, MVB 4 (Ghent: Annoot-Braeckman, 1872), (II) 169.

a community usually made up of a varied cross-section of society. In short, it was the context in which the traditional religion of most Europeans, such as Marcus van Vaernewijck, was lived out on a daily basis. As such, this entity holds the key to a deeper understanding of different facets of the medieval and early modern period. Its complexity brings challenges, as the study of a parish cannot be restricted to one specific domain of history, such as religious or ecclesiastical history, economic history, social history, art history, etc. However, it is precisely at this intersection that new insights can be discovered on well-known historiographical themes such as the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation.

Although the functioning of a specific parish is a valid research subject, the challenge remains to connect the rich material to larger historiographical debates, without succumbing to a descriptive study. The Anglo-Saxon and German world have a stronger tradition in this field. For example, the Warwick Network for Parish Research gathers studies and facilitates an exchange between academic research and the work of local historians.<sup>3</sup> Researchers who have successfully used parish research to add to academic debates are Beat Kümin, Katherine French, Gary Gibbs, Paul Barnwell, Clive Burgess, Eamon Duffy and Andrew Spicer.<sup>4</sup> Their work has shown that it is precisely because parishes had a variety of functions that they are so useful for adding a point of view that the older historiography on political and religious change has often neglected, namely the agency of lower and local institutions and “ordinary” people. Furthermore, a lot of a parish’s activities were recorded, so many parishes have rich archives and abundant source material available for research, for example the serial churchwarden accounts.

For the Low Countries, until a few decades ago, a top-down approach was indeed dominant. This research tradition, which has strongly influenced mainstream views of Catholicism during the late 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, mainly focused on institutions. The historiography on the Southern Low Countries has also privileged the period after 1585

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<sup>3</sup> For a list of the latest publications on parish research, see the website of Warwick Network for Parish Research and the My-Parish portal: [https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross\\_fac/myparish/resources/newpublications/](https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/myparish/resources/newpublications/) (consulted 05/09/19).

<sup>4</sup> Beat Kümin, ‘The English Parish in a European Perspective’, in *The Parish in English Life 1400-1600*, ed. K. French, G. Gibbs, and Beat Kümin (Manchester: University Press, 1997), 15–32; Beat Kümin, ‘Sacred Church and Worldly Tavern: Reassessing an Early Modern Divide’, in *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Will Coster and Andrew Spicer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 17–38; Katherine French, Gary Gibbs, and Beat Kümin, eds., *The Parish in English Life, 1400-1600* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1997); Katherine French, *The Good Women of the Parish. Gender and Religion after the Black Death* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); Andrew Spicer, ed., *Parish Churches in the Early Modern World* (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2016).

and has mainly highlighted the initial failure of the implementation of Tridentine Catholicism. A leading figure is the church historian Michel Cloet, who since the 1960s has produced many studies on the subject of early modern Catholicism in Flanders. He and many of his students have argued that the implementation of religious reforms in daily life only got under way in the first decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Cloet's narrative of religious change and the spread of Counter-Reformation Catholicism has mainly stressed political events and the role of ecclesiastical reorganization.<sup>5</sup> Despite important organizational changes at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, his studies describe Catholicism as not up to Tridentine standards for most of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Similar ideas can be found in many other studies published until the 1990s.<sup>6</sup>

There are several reasons why Cloet and other historians have come to this negative assessment. Firstly, they focused on the ecclesiastical authorities and institutions, which had suffered heavy blows during the first decades of the Dutch Revolt (1568-1648). They recovered more slowly than smaller institutions and local traditions. Secondly, these historians have used sources such as visitation reports, which particularly had the aim of pointing out behaviour and practices that did not comply with the rules of the Catholic church. Thirdly, these scholars were often strongly prejudiced by what they understood as basic Catholic standards, but were in fact modern ideas.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, Catholic traditions, doctrines, practice and morals have undergone many changes throughout history; behaviour in earlier times cannot be judged by modern standards. Finally, the strong

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<sup>5</sup> Michel Cloet, *Het Kerkelijk Leven in Een Landelijke Dekenij van Vlaanderen Tijdens de XVIIe Eeuw: Tielt van 1609 Tot 1700* (Louvain: Belgisch centrum voor landelijke geschiedenis, 1968); Michel Cloet, 'Bisschop Triest Op Bezoek Te Pamele (1624-1652)', in *Gedenkboek 750 Jaar Pamelekerk* (Oudenaarde, 1985), 151-61.

<sup>6</sup> Michal Bauwens, 'Parish Studies and the Debates on Religious Life in the Low Countries (Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period)', *History Compass* 13, no. 2 (2015): 64-77; Michal Bauwens, 'Restoration and Reform of the Parish after Trent. The Case of St James in Ghent (1561-1630)', in *Church, Censorship and Reform in the Early Modern Habsburg Netherlands*, Bibliothèque de La Revue d'histoire Ecclésiastique 101 (Louvain: Brepols, 2017), 167-85; Marc Therry, *De religieuze beleving bij de leken in het 17e-eeuwse bisdom Brugge (1609-1706)*, vol. 128, *Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse der letteren* (Brussels: Koninklijke academie voor wetenschappen, letteren en schone kunsten van België, 1988); Leo Braeken, *De dekenij Herentals (1603-1669). Bijdrage tot de studie van het godsdienstig leven in het bisdom Antwerpen*, *Symbolae Facultatis Litterarum et Philosophiae Lovaniensis* 1 (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1982).

<sup>7</sup> See also the critiques on the work of Jacques Toussaert on late medieval religion in Flanders: Annemarie Speetjens, 'A Quantitative Approach to Late Medieval Transformations of Piety in the Low Countries. Historiography and New Ideas', in *Pieties in Transition. Religious Practices and Experiences, c. 1400-1640*, ed. Robert Lutton and Elisabeth Salter (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), 109-26; S.J. Dierickx, 'Beoordeling van Le sentiment Religieux à la Fin du Moyen-Age van Jacques Toussaert', *Handelingen der Koninklijke Zuidnederlandse Maatschappij voor Taal-en Letterkunde en Geschiedenis*, no. 19 (1965): 319-37; Toussaert used serial churchwarden accounts but fell in the same trap: Jacques Toussaert, *Le sentiment religieux en Flandre à la fin du Moyen-Age* (Paris, 1963); J. Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 20.

focus on rural parishes – which often had fewer resources and parishioners than urban parishes – has distorted the view.<sup>8</sup> An exception is the thesis of Cloet's last doctoral student Marie Juliette Marinus. Her study of the Counter-Reformation in Antwerp has presented a more nuanced image of Catholicism as she focused on the negotiations between secular and ecclesiastical powers, on the one hand, and the citizens of Antwerp, on the other hand. Early modern Catholicism in the period before 1585, however, remained shrouded in mystery.<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile, internationally, the focus shifted to bottom-up processes that (re)formed Catholicism, opening up interesting debates on the agency of ordinary Catholics in religious change and showing how diverse Catholicism at the local level could be in practice. John Bossy's *Christianity in the West 1400-1700* is a well-known example of a work that primarily focuses on “popular” religion, while maintaining a broad chronological and geographical perspective.<sup>10</sup> Eamon Duffy's revisionist *The Stripping of the Altars* has led to interesting debates about agency and continuity and change in religion.<sup>11</sup> Apart from “agency” and “religious change”, the keywords in these debates are “passive/active”, “(Catholic) identity”, “appropriation”, “accommodation” and “negotiation”. Craig Harline drew attention to the theories informing this history “from below”. Following David Sabean's plea to see culture (and thus religion) as a process or discourse, Harline argued that a better insight into early modern Catholicism is possible via a close study of the subtle forms of negotiation that varied strongly both geographically and chronologically.<sup>12</sup>

For the Southern Low Countries, Judith Pollmann's more recent study on Catholic identity during the Revolt has been ground-breaking and it also has strongly informed the present study. Pollmann has been able to illustrate how many Catholics in the Low Countries were actively involved in their religion, especially so after 1585, when the Calvinist regimes in the South were overturned. She claims that the Catholic Reconquista

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<sup>8</sup> For a list of studies published by or under the tutorship of Michel Cloet, see: Eddy Put, Marie Juliette Marinus, and Hans Storme, eds., *Geloven in Het Verleden. Studies over Het Godsdienstig Leven in de Vroegmoderne Tijd, Aangeboden Aan Michel Cloet*, vol. 22, Symbolae Facultatis Litterarum et Philosophiae Lovaniensis, A (Louvain: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 1996).

<sup>9</sup> Marie Juliette Marinus, *De Contrareformatie te Antwerpen (1585-1676)*, vol. 155, Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse der letteren 57 (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1995).

<sup>10</sup> John Bossy, *Christianity in the West. 1400-1700*, Opus Books (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

<sup>11</sup> Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580*.

<sup>12</sup> Craig Harline, ‘Official Religion - Popular Religion in Recent Historiography of the Catholic Reformation’, *Archiv Für Reformationsgeschichte*, no. 81 (1990): 239–62; David W. Sabean, *Power in the Blood: Popular Culture and Village Discourse in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 94.

led to a more militant spirit and that many Catholics took a more aggressive stance towards Protestantism than they had done before the era of the so-called Calvinist Republics (c. 1577-85).<sup>13</sup> This vibrancy after a period of crisis has been described for other Catholic regions too, although the majority of studies on early modern Catholicism focus on the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>14</sup>

While these more recent studies have recognized the role of parishioners and local institutions in the formation of a militant Counter-Reformation spirit, the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and especially the years before 1585, have still been largely overlooked. Pollmann did study these early years through the lens of narrative accounts, but she concluded that in the aftermath of the first iconoclasm in 1566, the majority of the Catholic laity lacked militancy and were rather passive. One of the arguments of the present study is that “passivity” is not a label suitable for the parishioners of Ghent, a city notorious for its tradition of protest and revolt.<sup>15</sup> Catholics did not take up arms in the face of the Reformation, but this can be explained by their traditions, values and the specific political context. As we will see, there were other ways to show one’s allegiance to or care for the Church.

Another interesting shift in recent historiography is related to sources and methodology. Religion is no longer viewed as a purely spiritual or institutional matter. The spatial turn, informed by the theories of Henri Lefebvre, has resulted in the recognition of the importance of the physical aspects of piety, leading to more interdisciplinary historical research. Not only physical spaces, but also objects are considered cultural products which arise from negotiations between the various parties in a given context. These negotiated spaces and objects, in turn, determine social behaviour.<sup>16</sup> Historians are now making fruitful use of art history and architectural

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<sup>13</sup> Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635*.

<sup>14</sup> For an interesting study on music in Counter-Reformation Antwerp, see Stefanie Beghein, ‘Kerkmuziek, Consumptie En Confessionalisering: Het Muziekleven Aan Antwerpse Parochiekerken, C. 1585-1797’ (Antwerp: Antwerp University, 2014), 186–87; More general works on the topic are: Claude Bruneel and Philippe Guignet, ‘Conclusion’, in *Les ‘Trente Glorieuses’ (circa 1600-circa 1630) Pays-Bas Méridionaux et France Septentrionale. Aspects Économiques, Sociaux et Religieux Au Temps Des Archiducs Albert et Isabelle*, ed. C. Bruneel et al. (Bruxelles: Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique, 2010), 413–26; Alain Lottin, *Lille, Citadelle de La Contre-Réforme? (1598-1668)*, *Histoire et Civilisations* (Dunkerque: Presses Universitaires de Septentrion, 2013).

<sup>15</sup> Marc Boone and Maarten Prak, ‘Rulers, Patricians, and Burghers: The Great and the Little Traditions of Urban Revolt in the Low Countries’, in *A Miracle Mirrored: The Dutch Republic in European Perspective*, ed. Karel Davids and Jan Lucassen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 99–134; Marc Boone, ‘The Dutch Revolt and the Medieval Tradition of Urban Dissent’, *Journal of Early Modern History* 11 (2007): 351–75.

<sup>16</sup> Violet Soen and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, ‘Sacrale Ruimtes in de Vroegmoderne Nederlanden: Perspectieven En Dwarsverbanden’, in *Sacrale Ruimte in de Vroegmoderne Nederlanden*, ed. Violet Soen and Liesbeth Geevers,

history in order to better understand late medieval and early modern piety. The recent volume *Sacrale Ruimte in de Vroegmoderne Nederlanden*, edited by Violet Soen and Liesbet Geevers, reveals how this methodology can bring new revisionist insights to the debates on early modern religion in the Low Countries.<sup>17</sup> This work follows in the footsteps of Andrew Spicer, who has argued for greater attention to space and materiality in the study of religion.<sup>18</sup> Notably, Spicer's recent *Parish Churches in the Early Modern World* combines the study of liturgy and architecture with an analysis of the political context in which parishes function.<sup>19</sup>

The doctoral thesis of Ruben Suykerbuyk on the collegial church of St Leonard in the Brabantine town of Zoutleeuw is another example of the combined use of art-historical and administrative sources in order to grasp the chronology of and causality in changes in religious and material culture.<sup>20</sup> Another recent example (and a study whose title sounds surprisingly similar to ours) is Jeffrey Muller's *St. Jacob's Antwerp Art and Counter Reformation in Rubens's Parish Church*.<sup>21</sup> Muller uses the study of one parish, namely St James in Antwerp, to unravel the changes in material culture during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Suykerbuyk's and Muller's studies are limited to one church, but this allows them to write a micro-history of artistic renewal, while placing this firmly in a wider cultural, political and economic context.

The shift in focus in recent historiography towards local studies, emphasizing diversity and the agency of parishioners, has also met with some reservations. Jeffrey Muller and Xander van Eck have claimed that the various Catholic actions did not take place in a vacuum, but were guided by a system of symbols shared by the community and partially imposed top-down by the political and ecclesiastical authorities. Although both scholars mainly focus on the art-historical aspects of Catholicism in the early modern period, these

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Nieuwe Tijdingen. Over Vroegmoderne Geschiedenis (Louvain: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 2017), 7–28; Henri Lefebvre, *La Production de l'espace* (Paris, 1974).

<sup>17</sup> Violet Soen and Liesbeth Geevers, eds., *Sacrale Ruimte in de Vroegmoderne Nederlanden*, Nieuwe Tijdingen. Over Vroegmoderne Geschiedenis (Louvain: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 2017); Soen and Van Bruaene, 'Sacrale Ruimtes in de Vroegmoderne Nederlanden: Perspectieven En Dwarsverbanden'.

<sup>18</sup> Andrew Spicer and Sarah Hamilton, eds., *Defining the Holy. Sacred Space in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot, Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2005); Will Coster and Andrew Spicer, eds., *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>19</sup> Spicer, *Parish Churches in the Early Modern World*.

<sup>20</sup> Ruben Suykerbuyk, 'The Matter of Piety. Material Culture in Zoutleeuw's Church of Saint Leonard (c. 1450–1620)' (doctoral dissertation, Ghent, Ghent University, 2017).

<sup>21</sup> Jeffrey M. Muller, *St. Jacob's Antwerp Art and Counter Reformation in Rubens's Parish Church*, Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 253 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2016).

comments are also valid for research beyond the field of art history.<sup>22</sup> The issue is further complicated by the growing insight that top-down processes themselves were far from unified, as illustrated in Massimo Firpo's research.<sup>23</sup> Craig Harline highlighted these problems as early as 1990 in his critical discussion of the historiography of popular religion. He pointed out how a failure to study the ecclesiastical hierarchy could lead to misunderstandings about the religion of "ordinary" people, as these groups did not live in separate worlds but influenced each other.<sup>24</sup>

Indeed, recent works on ecclesiastical "elites" and the higher religious institutions that have abandoned a confessional bias have proven indispensable for our understanding of the structures that influenced the local context. For the Netherlands, Violet Soen's research has aided in understanding the precise role of (central) political forces and of the higher levels of the ecclesiastical organization in the creation of the institutional framework during the period under study.<sup>25</sup> More specifically, Andrew Spicer has added interesting insights to the debate on the reconstruction of Catholic churches after the outbreaks of iconoclasm, while focusing mainly on the higher political and ecclesiastical powers.<sup>26</sup> Importantly, both Spicer and Soen question the consensus of the older historiography on the start of the Counter-Reformation. Whereas Spicer argues that there was an immediate reaction of the secular authorities after the first outbreak of iconoclasm in 1566, Soen, together with other historians such as Nicole Lemaitre and Aurelie Van de Meulebroucke, makes a plea for a reassessment of the chronology of Catholic Reform by pointing to specific episcopal policies to fight heresy and protect Catholicism in the pre-Tridentine era.<sup>27</sup>

The present study fits the trend of reassessing the chronology of the Counter-Reformation, but it also seeks to understand the processes behind it by focusing on the

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<sup>22</sup> Jeffrey M. Muller and Xander van Eck, 'Foreword', *Simiolus, Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 38, no. 3 (2016/2015): 115–17.

<sup>23</sup> Massimo Firpo, 'Rethinking "Catholic Reform" and "Counter-Reformation": What Happened in Early Modern Catholicism - a View from Italy', *Journal of Early Modern History* 20 (2016): 293–312.

<sup>24</sup> Harline, 'Official Religion - Popular Religion in Recent Historiography of the Catholic Reformation', 239–43.

<sup>25</sup> Violet Soen, *Vredehandel. Adellijke En Habsburgse Verzoeningspogingen Tijdens de Nederlandse Opstand.*, Amsterdam Studies in the Dutch Golden Age (Amsterdam: University Press, 2012).

<sup>26</sup> Andrew Spicer, 'After Iconoclasm: Reconciliation and Resacralisation in the Southern Netherlands, c. 1566–1585', *Sixteenth Century Journal* XLIV/2 (2013): 411–34.

<sup>27</sup> Violet Soen and Aurelie Van de Meulebroucke, 'Vanguard Tridentine Reform in the Habsburg Netherlands. The Episcopacy of Robert de Croy, Bishop of Cambrai (1519–56)', in *Church, Censorship and Reform in the Early Modern Habsburg Netherlands*, Bibliothèque de La Revue d'histoire Ecclésiastique 101 (Louvain: Brepols, 2017); Nicole Lemaitre, 'L'idéal Pastoral de Réforme et Le Concile de Trente (XIVe-XVIe Siècle)', in *The Council of Trent. Reform and Controversy in Europe and Beyond (1540–1700)*, Vol. 2: *Between Bishops and Princes*, ed. Wim François and Violet Soen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 9–32.

role of the lower ecclesiastical institution of the parish and the parishioners themselves. The focus of this study is the parish of St James in Ghent in the period from c. 1562 to c. 1600. The decision to study an urban parish was deliberate, as most of the older historiography on early modern Catholicism in the Southern Netherlands has focused on rural parishes, which are very different in make-up. When it comes to political history, the period of the Dutch Revolt has been properly studied for Ghent and other towns.<sup>28</sup> The existing literature offers a clear political background that can be used to frame the social and religious activities in Ghent in this period. The ideal study on the Catholic Reformation should untangle the various relationships between the different agents of Catholic change, pinpoint the complex negotiations that led to change, while simultaneously examining the socio-economic and political influences at play in each context. This study does not have the ambition to cover all these areas, but it has made fruitful use of some of the new methodological insights into the historiography of religion. It uses the framework of the parish to gain an understanding of the changing role of religion in the actions of Ghent's citizens, while at the same time analysing the agency of parishioners in the changes in Catholic practice at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

By starting the study with the period before the first outbreak of iconoclasm, it is possible to gain an insight into parish life before the well-known Catholic restoration campaigns of the higher ecclesiastical and secular authorities. Our case study is delimited to the period 1562-1600 because of the available sources and specific events. It focuses strongly on the immediate reaction to two great moments of crisis for the church of St James: the iconoclasm of 1566 and the period of the Ghent Calvinist Republic from 1577 to 1584. Protestant ideas, political and institutionalized Calvinism, and iconoclasm swept through Ghent during this period and posed a threat to traditional religion in various ways. As the attack was multi-layered, so was the response of Ghent's Catholics. Furthermore, this response evolved over time. The changing responses are captured in this study through the use of various sources and methodologies. By turning the spotlight on a limited period, a specific community and a small territory and by examining them from different angles, a more nuanced image of the parish emerges.

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<sup>28</sup> P. Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots. The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2008); Peter Arnade, 'The Rage of the "Canaille": The Logic of Fury in the Iconoclasm Riots of 1566', in *Emotions in the Heart of the City (14th-16th Century)*, ed. Elodie Lecuppre-Desjardin and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, *Studies in European Urban History (1100-1800)* 5 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 93-111; Fernando González De León and Geoffrey Parker, 'The Grand Strategy of Philip II and the Revolt of the Netherlands', in *The Origins and Development of the Dutch Revolt*, ed. Graham Darby (London, New York: Routledge, 2001), 107-32; Guido Marnef, 'The Towns and the Revolt', in *The Origins and Development of the Dutch Revolt*, ed. Graham Darby (London, New York: Routledge, 2001), 84-106; Robert S. Duplessis, *Lille and the Dutch Revolt. Urban Stability in an Era of Revolution 1500-1582* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Geoffrey Parker, *The Dutch Revolt* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977).



Chapter 1 covers the role of the parish as an institution and introduces the political aspects of the important events that shaped the period under study, while Chapter 2 focuses on the social relations in Ghent. This section uncovers, mainly through the use of narrative sources, the shared social and religious values that kept Ghent relatively peaceful even when “new” religious ideas were being introduced. Here, the eyewitness account of Marcus Van Vaernewijck (cf. below) is the main source. Although the political context and events also played an important role, the social rules and specific local traditions seem to be key to understanding the major difference between the handling of religious unrest in Ghent and the more explosive situation in France.

The outbreaks of iconoclasm not only defied the social world, but they particularly challenged the material centre of traditional religion. Chapter 3 discusses the financing of the repairs of the church of St James after the two episodes of iconoclasm (1566 and 1578-79), while Chapter 4 focuses on the material repairs themselves and purchases for services and decoration of the church. The churchwarden accounts of St James have proven to be a remarkably rich source for studying these two aspects. Chapter 3 mainly borrows a quantitative approach, making use of the serial income categories to uncover any changes in the (traditional) way of funding repairs of the parish church after the iconoclasm. Chapter 4 focuses on the priority given to the various repairs and the use and importance of church space and (micro-architectural) objects. Apart from practical needs and financial restrictions, ideology and religious practice determined the various restoration projects within the church building. Both the study of the finances and the materiality of the repairs prove to be an interesting approach for detecting changes at the local level.

Piety, or at least religious rites that were performed in the setting of the parish church, are addressed in more detail in the final chapter of this thesis. Here both narrative eyewitness accounts and churchwarden accounts are used to gain insight into two aspects of Christian practice. Firstly, the study of the sermons preached by the Catholic clergy and by Protestants before and after the *beeldenstorm* and their respective attendance shows just how interested Ghent's citizens were in ideology and pious living. Secondly, the changes in specific church practices, such as funeral culture, reveal the agency of the parishioners in the construction of early modern Catholicism. These parish practices were intertwined with the practical and the social, but were directed by an ideological agenda shaped by international politics, local events, shared traditions and individual preferences. In this study, the spotlight is mainly on the less studied local and individual contributions to the development of early modern Catholicism.

While the general time frame of this research is 1562-1600, depending on the subject and the available sources a more limited or longer period of time is examined in the chapters. For example, Chapter 2 is limited to the year of the first iconoclasm (1566) and in Chapter 5 the study of the sermons only covers a few years in detail, starting with the hedge sermons in 1566. Other analyses have followed developments up to the 1630s. In

general, the focus is on the less studied period, starting with the two outbreaks of iconoclasm and ending with the start of the reign of the archdukes Albrecht and Isabella (1595/1598-1621). This focus helps to shed new light on reforms that are often believed to have only been initiated during the reign of the archdukes.

## Sources

The main sources used are the churchwarden accounts of St James, which are kept in the State Archives in Ghent. The oldest account that is handed down to us dates from 1562, which explains the starting date for this study. From this date onwards, only a few are missing for the period 1562-1600. Unless otherwise mentioned, all the accounts start and end on *Sint-Jansmesse*, the feast of St John on 24 June. They usually cover one year. Yet, occasionally in the first decades, and later more frequently, they span two or more years. The dates are always given in new style. All the amounts given are in pounds, shillings and pence or Flemish denier groten and sometimes the older currency “parisis”. A penny or Flemish denier groten is equivalent to 12 denier parisis, so parisis were only used for smaller amounts in this period. Unless otherwise stated we use in the text the currency of Flemish groten. 1 pound equalled 20 shilling or 240 deniers.

The repetition of the same structure over a long period of time – first the income and then the expenditure, each with their specific subdivisions – enables us to follow the evolution of the finances, and thus a large part of the workings of the churchwardens who were responsible for the church fabric. The disadvantage of the accounts as historical source material lies in their original limited function as a purely administrative and financial record. We can only trace past events that had a financial consequence for the institution and so had to be recorded for administrative purposes. In this sense, the churchwarden accounts only give a limited view of the past of the parish of St James. Nevertheless, as many aspects of Catholic church life went hand in hand with financial transactions (offerings, buying of candles and wax, payments for funerals, work on the church building, etc.), the accounts shed light on trends in many aspects of the religious and social culture of the parish.

Two other important sources that facilitated more qualitative research are the diary of Marcus Van Vaernewijck, published in the 19<sup>th</sup> century under the title *Van die beroerlicke tijden in die Nederlanden en voornamelick in Ghendt 1566-1568*<sup>29</sup>, and the diary of the

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<sup>29</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*.

brothers Cornelis and Philip Van Campene, namely *Behelzende het verhaal der merkwaardigste gebeurtenissen, voorgevallen te Gent sedert het begin der godsdienstberoerten tot den 5en april 1571*<sup>30</sup>.

The most frequently used diary is that of Marcus Van Vaernewijck, who was a churchwarden of St James at the very moment he wrote his account. He describes in great detail the events preceding and following the first iconoclasm in Ghent, discusses the destruction, and he also has an eye for the religious and political ideologies behind the events, which he tries to describe accurately while also giving his own opinions on the subject. He died in 1568 and therefore we only have his detailed account for two years of the Troubles. Van Vaernewijck was an upper-class citizen who came from an old and wealthy Ghent family. From 1562 onwards, he served in various political functions in Ghent. Moreover, his education and love of writing were put to good use in the chamber of rhetoric Mariën Theeren, where he was a playwright.<sup>31</sup> His Catholic identity and beliefs are obvious throughout his account. When discussing Protestant actions and ideas, Van Vaernewijck used Catholic theology and history to counter them. This indicates that he did not necessarily want to give a neutral report, but rather that he wanted his diary to serve an educational and ideological purpose. It is precisely this polemical aspect that makes the diary so interesting. It reveals Van Vaernewijck's perspective on society and provides an understanding of Catholic attitudes in this period.<sup>32</sup>

The accounts of the Van Campene brothers were particularly useful for studying the sermons in Ghent, as they recorded a summary of most of the sermons of the first bishop of Ghent, Cornelius Jansenius. These authors were also upper-class and Catholic, but their language is more reserved than that of Van Vaernewijck. The elder brother Cornelis began the diary at the beginning of the Troubles, but he died shortly afterwards, in September 1567. His brother Philip, a member of the Council of Flanders, took over the diary and added observations. Only the first part of their original account (until 1571) has been translated and edited by Frans de Potter.<sup>33</sup> Only the edition of De Potter was consulted for this thesis.

Besides these three main sources, various administrative documents have been consulted. Most archival documents are kept in the State Archives (Rijksarchief) and the

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<sup>30</sup> Cornelis & Philip Van Campene, *Dagboek van Cornelis En Philip van Campene Behelzende Het Verhaal Der Merkwaardigste Gebeurtenissen Voorgevallen Te Gent, Sedert Het Begin Der Godsdienstberoerten Tot Den 15e April 1571*, ed. Frans De Potter (Ghent: Annoot-Braeckman, 1870).

<sup>31</sup> Koen Lamont, *Het Wereldbeeld van Een Zestiende-Eeuwse Gentenaar Marcus van Vaernewijck*, *Verhandelingen Der Maatschappij Voor Geschiedenis En Oudheidkunde Te Gent* 30 (Ghent, 2005), 51, 57–58.

<sup>32</sup> Judith Pollmann has also used the account of Van Vaernewijck for her analysis of the Catholic attitudes after the first outbreak of iconoclasm: Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635*.

<sup>33</sup> Van Campene, *Dagboek van Cornelis En Philip van Campene Behelzende Het Verhaal Der Merkwaardigste Gebeurtenissen Voorgevallen Te Gent, Sedert Het Begin Der Godsdienstberoerten Tot Den 15e April 1571*, V–VII; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635*.

City Archives (Stadsarchief) of Ghent. The use of different kind of sources and various methodologies has enabled a multi-dimensional reconstruction of the parish of St James in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The response of this parish to the challenges posed by iconoclasm and the Calvinist Republic manifested itself in a variety of material, organizational and ideological ways, and these tell us a great deal about the parish, the agency of parishioners and important Catholic developments in a period of limited ecclesiastical control.

# Chapter 1

## The institutional framework

### 1.1 The St James parish

#### 1.1.1 Territory

The oldest description of a part of the territory of St James dates back to 1711 and can be found in a document in which Bishop Philip Erardus divided the parish into two parts. There were two pastors then, so each became responsible for the pastoral care of their portion. The idea behind this division was to avoid conflict between the priests and it had already been suggested in the *status ecclesiae parochialis* in 1623. Not only did the settlement of 1711 indicate where the separation line ran, but it also mentioned some of the main streets of the St James parish. The southern part of the parish contained the following streets: the quarter of the Antwerpse poort or Dampoort, the whole of Steendam up to the Kernemelkbrug and the right-hand side after this bridge up to the house near the Lam where a certain Robertus Verdorm lived. On the left-hand side, when coming to St James from Dampoort, all the streets and quarters south of the church were part of this southern portion as well. For the northern district, the southern border was formed by Kammerstraat, Serpentstraatje, Onderstraat and Schepenhuisstraatje. Those houses on the left side of these streets (when coming from the church) belonged to the southern part, while those on the right were part of the northern district.<sup>34</sup> The map shown below is based on what we know of Ghent in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and later, more detailed descriptions of the parish borders.

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<sup>34</sup> Frans Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, 1975, 203-204 (II), 12-14 (III).





Figure 1 Borders St James drawn on a map of Ghent created by Jacob de Deventer (1545)<sup>35</sup>

<sup>35</sup> The map is property of the Spanish National library and is part of the manuscript “Planos de ciudades de los Países Bajos.. Parte II, fo 85. <http://www.bne.es/es/Catalogos/BibliotecaDigitalHispanica/Inicio/index.html>. We tried to follow as much as possible Frans Verstraeten’s indications based on his analysis of the 18th century manuscript, but as streets and streetnames have changed over time, this is not perfect science. We omitted a

St James formed together with St John (later St Bavo), St Michael and St Nicholas the four parishes of the city centre of Ghent. The St James parish encompassed an interesting part of the city. The square known as Vrijdagmarkt (Friday Market), which had been built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, had not only become the economic heart of the city, but it also had an important symbolic and political role. It would become the stage for many important public rituals, such as the Joyous Entry of every new prince arriving as the count of Flanders. Official decrees were read here, criminals executed, and all major processions passed through this square. Moreover, the Vrijdagmarkt was the stage for the symbolic and real violence that was at the root of many rebellions. Since at least the 14<sup>th</sup> century, disputes among families and inhabitants of Ghent had often culminated in fights or been resolved at the Vrijdagmarkt.<sup>36</sup> The significance of the square would have added to the standing and individuality of the St James parish.

The parishes of Ghent were further divided into neighbourhoods. At the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century there were about 190 neighbourhoods listed in Ghent and by the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century this number had risen to 238. These divisions were purely based on territory, usually uniting the inhabitants of one or two streets. A list dating from the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century noted 30 neighbourhoods in the St James parish. Throughout the Middle Ages, the division into neighbourhoods occurred almost organically in both rural and urban areas, but they seemed to have been given a more official status in Ghent, and produced archive only from the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards. In contrast, the division of the parish into quarters (*wijken*) was organized top-down and immediately had more administrative purposes. In 1777, Ghent had 19 *wijken*. Especially in the late Middle Ages, these *wijken* had a rather military character.<sup>37</sup>

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precise eastern border as the changes over time in that area must have been the strongest, and we preferred to focus on the more historical and densely populated part of the parish.

<sup>36</sup> Marc Boone, 'Een Middeleeuwse Metropool', in *Gent, Stad van Alle Tijden*, ed. Marc Boone and Gita Deneckere (Ghent: Mercatorfonds/STAM, 2010), 56; Marc Boone, 'Gent: Vrijdagmarkt. De Macht van de Massa', in *Plaatsen van Herinnering. Nederland van Prehistorie Tot Beeldenstorm*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2007), 244–50; Peter Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 47, 204, 211.

<sup>37</sup> Koen Vervaeke, 'De Gebuurten Te Gent' (Master's Thesis, Louvain, Catholic University of Louvain, 1982), 6, 7, 25, 192; Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent*, 44–45.

### 1.1.2 Population

The economic activity and population of Ghent soared during the Middle Ages. 64.000 people were living in Ghent by the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>38</sup> After 1484, the population dropped sharply.<sup>39</sup> There are some calculations for the number of parishioners of St James from the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Blockmans puts the figure at 4700 for the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. St Michael's parish, the economic centre of the city, then had about 6100 parishioners and St John's parish 8700 (in comparison, 8460 people lived the city of Kortrijk in that period).<sup>40</sup> Due to the disastrous effects of the Dutch Revolt, Ghent had about 31,000 inhabitants in 1606. However, after a steady increase this figure rose to 37,000 people by 1625. Estimates of the number of parishioners of St James point to 3243 people in 1625. St Michael's parish then had about 4710 inhabitants. Numbers for St John, which had been renamed St Bavo by that time, are missing. Based on the numbers of communicants in 1712, the number of parishioners of St James has been put at 4000, while both St Bavon and St Michael are estimated to have had 9000 parishioners each. However, Blockmans believes this number of 9000 is exaggerated, even though he offers no alternative estimate.<sup>41</sup>

Ghent as a whole did not show social segregation, according to Boone, but there was sometimes a division based on profession.<sup>42</sup> According to Arnade, the workers' neighbourhoods were quite poor and situated in Ghent's outer rings. Textile zones could be found everywhere in the city, but many weavers lived in St Peter's village, where the weavers' hall and the weavers' chapel could also be found. The city's wealthiest people were attracted to the financial centres and marketplaces, so this could be in several parishes. As the Vrijdagmarkt was the most prominent marketplace it attracted a large number of wealthy people. However, other areas within the St James parish were clearly poorer.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Walter Prevenier, 'La Démographie Des Villes Du Comté de Flandre Aux XIVe et XVe Siècles. Etat de Question. Essai d'interprétation', *Revue Du Nord* LXV, no. 257 (1983): 255–56.

<sup>39</sup> Willem Blockmans, 'Peilingen Naar de Sociale Structuren Te Gent Tijdens de Late 15e Eeuw', in *Studien Betreffende de Sociale Structuren Te Brugge, Kortrijk En Gent in de 14e En 15e Eeuw*, by Willem Blockmans et al. (Ghent, 1971), 242.

<sup>40</sup> Blockmans, 247–51; Peter Stabel, *De Kleine Stad in Vlaanderen. Bevolkingsdynamiek En Economische Functies van de Kleine En Secundaire Stedelijke Centra in Het Gentse Kwartier (14de-16de Eeuw)*, vol. 156, *Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie Voor Wetenschappen, Letteren En Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse Der Letteren* 57 (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1995).

<sup>41</sup> Blockmans, 'Peilingen Naar de Sociale Structuren Te Gent Tijdens de Late 15e Eeuw', 253–55.

<sup>42</sup> Boone, 'Een Middeleeuwse Metropool', 58.

<sup>43</sup> Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent*, 42–45.



A study by Blockmans on the social divisions in Ghent shows that in 1492, St James was a socially mixed parish. Most craftsmen and tradesmen lived around the Vrijdagmarkt and the Lange Munt. The parish's wealthiest people could also be found in these streets, as well as in Koningstraat, Kammerstraat, Nieuwstraat, Nagelstraat, Waaistraat and Steendam. Although more poor people lived in the Gracht, Varkensmarkt and Plaatsje, affluent parishioners resided there as well. Poor neighbourhoods included Nieuwpoort, Loofsteeg, Standveestraatje-Kontentast, Struvelstraat, Wolfsteeg, Guldestraat, Katelijnenestraat, Gelukstraat and Baudelostraat. Apart from the two first streets, a few wealthier inhabitants also lived in these neighbourhoods. In fact, poor people lived all over the parish. This is not surprising as 53% of the people of St James were considered poor and did not have to pay the family tax. This percentage of poor was not exceptional and was also found in the parish of St Michael and in other cities. St John's parish had a higher percentage of poor people.<sup>44</sup>

Not all those who were poor received help from the parochial institution for poor relief, also called the *Tafel van de Heilige Geest* (Table of the Holy Spirit). The documents studied by Blockmans reveal that only 17.25% of Ghent families received support.<sup>45</sup>

### 1.1.3 Institutions

#### The clergy

Within St James there were several functions and institutions. At least from the 14<sup>th</sup> until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, St James had two priests responsible for the pastoral care of the parishioners.<sup>46</sup> In comparison, in 1455 St John had three, St Michael five and St Nicholas had two priests as well. Our Lady and Holy Christ each had one priest.<sup>47</sup> It is also certain that St James had two assistant priests in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>48</sup> The number of clergymen working in the parish church grew over time. According to taxation accounts studied by Blockmans, in 1492 there were 28 secular clergymen living in the parish.<sup>49</sup> The study of Boone and de Hemptinne on the Ghent secular clergy in 1498 shows that St James had

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<sup>44</sup> Blockmans, 'Peilingen Naar de Sociale Structuren Te Gent Tijdens de Late 15e Eeuw', 227–33, 251.

<sup>45</sup> Blockmans, 232.

<sup>46</sup> Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, 20 (I).

<sup>47</sup> Paul Rogghé, 'Gent in de XIVe En XVe Eeuw. De Geestelijkheid En Haar Tijd', *Appeltjes van Het Meetjesland* 24 (1973): 111.

<sup>48</sup> Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, 101 (I).

<sup>49</sup> Blockmans, 'Peilingen Naar de Sociale Structuren Te Gent Tijdens de Late 15e Eeuw', 234.

apart from two parish priests 27 chaplains and another 14 secular clergymen.<sup>50</sup> The chaplains could be paid by guilds or brotherhoods to perform services and masses in the chapel or at the altar of the guild. Private persons could also found a chapel or altar in the church and pay for a priest to perform the masses. Anniversaries (annual masses celebrated for the dead) were another reason for the growing number of masses and the need for priests.<sup>51</sup> Secular clergymen could also be found in the *cotidiane*, the parochial choir of priests responsible for the singing of the offertory. In the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the *cotidiane* of St James consisted of 13 clergymen, including the two parish priests. In 1429, their number was reduced to 12 because of a lack of funding. This number remained constant for some time but declined again in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, when it was never more than ten. By 1708, the *cotidiane* only had four chaplains and one assistant priest.<sup>52</sup>

A large number of chaplains was also found in other parish churches. According to Rogghé, St James had 26 chaplains in the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In the same period, St Nicholas had 27, St John 64, St Michael 36, Our Lady 19 and Holy Christ eight. Boone and de Hemptinne have slightly different numbers per parish, but the relative differences between the parishes is visible in their study too. Over time the number of secular clergy grew. While the six main Ghent parishes counted 99 secular clergymen in 1330, 281 were counted in 1498. These numbers still do not represent the total number as more chaplains could be found in other Ghent institutions and in the chapter of St Pharahild.<sup>53</sup>

## The laity

The division between the clergy and laity in the parish was partly artificial as certain functions could be held by both and members of the clergy could also be accepted within a lay institution. The most important institution for the daily functioning of the parish consisted of three to five churchwardens, who were usually laymen, but they had a say in more than just the practical and material aspects of the parish. For example, in 1491, they decided together with the parish priests and the institution for poor relief on the qualities required of the chaplains of the church. The same year they drafted a regulation on how chaplains should behave. They could also decide which guild or brotherhood had which chapel.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Marc Boone and Thérèse de Hemptinne, 'Le Clergé Séculier Gantois En 1498-1499', *Bulletin de La Commission Royale d'Histoire* 149, no. 3-4 (1983): 401-2.

<sup>51</sup> Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, 149-150 (I).

<sup>52</sup> Verstraeten, 101, 149-155 (I), 59 (II), 342 (III); W. Nolet and P.C. Boeren, *Kerkelijke Instellingen in de Middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam: Urbi et orbi, 1951), 191, 338-44.

<sup>53</sup> Rogghé, 'Gent in de XIVe En XVe Eeuw. De Geestelijkheid En Haar Tijd', 112-13; Boone and de Hemptinne, 'Le Clergé Séculier Gantois En 1498-1499', 401-2.

<sup>54</sup> Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, 102, 103, 112, 156 (I).

Another institution that consisted mainly of laymen was the Table of the Holy Spirit. Four Holy Spirit masters managed the distribution among the poor. This usually included goods such as bread, herring, oil and shoes. People could offer gifts, but over time the largest portion of the income of the Table of the Holy Spirit came from rents and other revenues coming from real estate that they had accumulated. Many wealthy parishioners mentioned the institution in their testament and offered an annual contribution. In return, the testators usually demanded specific services or masses in remembrance of their soul.<sup>55</sup>

Often churchwardens had been a member of the Table of the Holy Spirit before taking up the position of churchwarden. In the period under study, examples of such churchwardens are Peter Arents, Anthonis Baeke, Geeraert Elaut, Jan Gheerolfs, Pieter Vanderhaeghen, Guillaume Van Hauweghem, Lieven Van Hecke, Antheunis Uuten Hove, Peter Magnus, Jan De Meyere, Pieter Moens, Lieven De Moor and Jan De Stoppelaere.<sup>56</sup> Guillaume Van Hauweghem also took up the position of bookkeeper (*ontvanger*) of both the churchwarden accounts and the institution for parochial poor relief in the period from 1598 to 1630.<sup>57</sup> The function of churchwarden was an honourable position that was usually reserved for the well-to-do. Several churchwardens of St James had been members of the magistracy somewhere during their life time. Between 1538 and 1568, at least 14 churchwardens had also had a political career. Five of them had already been a churchwarden before they were an alderman (*schepen*): Lievin Dhooghe, Raphaël van der Sare, Adriaen Borluut, Ghyselbrecht Terlers and Peter van Ackere. The latter remained in politics after his position as churchwarden of St James ended. Lieven Cluetrijn and Gillis Diericx were respectively a churchwarden and a member of the Table of the Holy Spirit in the same period that they were part of the magistracy. Diericx remained in this parochial institution for poor relief for ten years after the end of his political career. The majority of those churchwardens with a political career, however, had already served in the magistracy when they took up the position of churchwarden or Holy Spirit master. Examples from this period include Jan Damman, Lord of Oomberghe, Jan van Dixmude, Willem van Hauweghem, Adriaen Meganck, Antheunis Utenhove, Marcus van Vaernewijck (see below) and Geeraert de Sceppere. This proves that having a prominent social position in Ghent was a prerequisite to becoming a churchwarden or Holy Spirit master, rather than that taking up a function in the parish aided a political career.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Verstraeten, 24–25, 54 (I), 77–91 (II).

<sup>56</sup> Annelies Somers, *Inventaris van Het Oud Archief van de Kerkfabriek En Parochie Sint-Jacobs Te Gent Met Inbegrip van de Parochiale Instellingen. (1231) 1302-1885*, Rijksarchief Te Gent Inventarissen 91 (Brussels: Algemeen Rijksarchief, 2011), 41–48.

<sup>57</sup> Somers, 50.

<sup>58</sup> Somers, 41–50. City Archives (SAG), *Memorieboek Gent deel II, 1501-1572*, p. 242-363.

## 1.2 The larger ecclesiastical framework

### 1.2.1 Ecclesiastical Ghent

St James was only a small part of the ecclesiastical structure of Ghent. At the foundation of most of the ecclesiastical framework of Ghent lay the two Benedictine abbeys of St Peter and St Bavon. They were both founded in the 7<sup>th</sup> century by the wandering bishop Amandus. Gifts and acquisitions increased the wealth of the abbeys and they soon became the largest landowners in the district. They then developed to also become important trade centres. Apart from their economic strength and local influence, over time they also gained political power. For example, in the 9<sup>th</sup> century they functioned as Carolingian imperial abbeys used by the prince to control the region.<sup>59</sup> The abbeys became important religious centres that functioned quite independently of the diocese of Tournai.<sup>60</sup>

With the increase in the population of Ghent, the abbeys initiated the building of new churches. The oldest parish church in the centre was St John (Sint-Jan) and founded by St Peter's abbey before or in 964. In the same period, the rural parish of St Martin was built at the instigation of the abbey of St Bavon. Between the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, five other parish churches were founded. The churches of St James and St Nicolas, which split off from St John, were situated on the right bank of the River Lys and were thus also under the jurisdiction of St Peter. The parish of St Michael, which separated from St Martin only in 1569, was situated on the left bank and had St Bavon as its patron. The areas in the immediate vicinity of the abbeys became more densely populated, so parish churches were built there as well. The church of Our Lady was erected next to St Peter's abbey and the church of St Saviour or Holy Christ was built in the village surrounding St Bavon.<sup>61</sup>

A small addition was made when in the 13<sup>th</sup> century the parish of St Pharahild was founded around the private chapel of the count of Flanders near the Gravensteen castle. Priest-chaplains had already been residing there with the count since the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>59</sup> G. Declercq and M.-C. Laleman, 'Archeologie van de stedelijke ruimte', in *Gent, stad van alle tijden*, ed. Marc Boone and Gita Deneckere (Ghent: Mercatorfonds/STAM, 2010), 21, 29, 32–34, 39–41.

<sup>60</sup> Declercq and Laleman, 47–49.

<sup>61</sup> Michel Cloet, *Het Bisdom Gent (1559–1991). Vier Eeuwen Geschiedenis*. (Ghent: Werkgroep de Geschiedenis van het Bisdom Gent, 1992), 22; Declercq and Laleman, 'Archeologie van de stedelijke ruimte', 48; Walter Prevenier and Marc Boone, 'De Stadstaat-Droom', in *Gent. Apologie van Een Rebelse Stad*, ed. J. Decavele (Antwerpen: Mercatorfonds, 1989), 48; Paul Trio, *Volksreligie als spiegel van een stedelijke samenleving. De broederschappen te Gent in de late middeleeuwen*, Symbolae Facultatis Litterarum et Philosophiae Lovaniensis 11 (Louvain: Leuven University Press, 1993), 111, 143, 156, 222 (part I); Boone and de Hemptinne, 'Le Clergé Séculier Gantois En 1498–1499', 382.

This group was officially transformed into a collegiate chapter at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The church dedicated to St Pharahild had St Bavon as its patron. It was a small parish whose territory comprised the area surrounding the church and the count's castle. One of the canons was responsible for the pastoral care of the parishioners, who were initially mainly courtiers. Later, as the function of the castle gradually changed, the parishioners had various backgrounds.<sup>62</sup>

The next, rather dramatic change in the ecclesiastical landscape was instigated by Emperor Charles V in his successful attempt to punish Ghent after the rebellion of 1539. As a punishment, in 1540 he instituted the Caroline Concession, a new civic constitution that removed many of Ghent's legal and political privileges. Among many other humiliations, he ordered the destruction of the abbey of St Bavon and the Holy Christ parish church and planned for the construction of a military citadel on its grounds. This later became known as the Spanish Castle. The canons of St Bavon moved to the church of St John, which was renamed St Bavo shortly afterwards.<sup>63</sup>

### 1.2.2 Hierarchical relations: the bishop and the patron

Parishes form part of an even larger ecclesiastical framework of bishoprics and archdioceses. In the Netherlands, the ecclesiastical structure had become established by the 11<sup>th</sup> century and consisted of the three archdioceses of Reims, Trier and Cologne and ten dioceses. Ghent belonged to the diocese of Tournai, which in turn was a subdivision of the archbishopric of Reims. The River Scheldt was the natural border with the diocese of Cambrai but the city of Ghent, built on both banks of the Scheldt, formed an exception

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<sup>62</sup> Georges Declercq, 'Nieuwe Inzichten over de Oorsprong van Het Sint-Veerlekapittel in Gent', *Handelingen Der Maatschappij Voor Geschiedenis En Oudheidkunde Te Gent* 63 (1989): 97–101; B. Meijns, 'Les Collégiales Des Villes de Flandre, Xe-XIIIe Siècles', in *Les Collégiales et La Ville Dans La Province Ecclésiastique de Reims (IXe-XVIe Siècles)*. *Actes Du Colloque d'Amiens-Beauvais 3-5 Juillet 2009 Organisé En l'honneur d'Hélène Millet*, Histoire Médiévale et Archéologie 23 (Amiens, 2010), 17–18; G. De Clercq, 'De Kerkelijke Instellingen in Gent in Verband Met de Oudste Stedelijke Geschiedenis', *Nederlandsche Historiebladen* II (1939): 117, 124; Annelies Somers, "'Amici nunc sicut et antea". Een stedelijke parochiekerk en een prinselijk kapittel tussen kerk en wereld in het laatmiddeleeuwse en vroegmoderne Gent. Sint-Niklaas en Sint-Veerle, 1384-1614.' (doctoral dissertation, Ghent, Ghent University, 2015).

<sup>63</sup> Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots. The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt*, 150–51; Marc Boone, 'Urban Space and Political Conflict in Late Medieval Flanders', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* XXXII, no. 4 (2002): 637; Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, *De Gentse Memorieboeken Als Spiegel van Stedelijk Historisch Bewustzijn (14de Tot 16de Eeuw)* (Ghent, 1998), 256; M.-C. Laleman, 'Woord, Beeld En Materie. Het Sint-Baafsdorp in Gent', in *Qui Valet Ingenio: Liber Amicorum Johan Decavele*, ed. J. De Zutter (Ghent, 1996), 300–311; Johan Decavele, *Keizer Tussen Stropdraggers. Karel V, 1500-1558* (Louvain, 1990); Peter Arnade, 'Privileges and the Political Imagination in the Ghent Revolt of 1539', in *Charles V in Context: The Making of a European Identity*, ed. Marc Boone and Marysa Demoor (Brussels: Ghent University, VUB Brussels University Press, 2003), 103–24.

and belonged fully to the diocese of Tournai. These divisions would remain relatively unchanged until 1559.<sup>64</sup>

The ten dioceses were rather large entities, which made control of the bishops difficult. Most neighbouring areas had more divisions.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, many of the bishops actually resided outside the Netherlands. The Dutch-speaking area had only one bishop see, namely Utrecht. The other bishops resided in Tournai, Arras, Cambrai, Thérouanne and Liège, in the southern and eastern margins of the Netherlands.<sup>66</sup> In order to counter the lack of control, the bishop of Tournai had a temporary residence in Ghent, where he or an assistant especially appointed for the Dutch-speaking part of the diocese resided for extended periods of time in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>67</sup> However, until the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the St James parish seems to have been more directly influenced by St Peter's abbey than by the bishop.

Many documents point to the church of Our Lady as the mother church of St John, St James and St Nicolas. In practice, they were treated as independent parish churches, at least from 1169 onwards, and they were most likely independent from the beginning. References such as "daughter church" or "daughter chapel" were used to accentuate the bond with their patron, the abbey of St Peter, which benefitted from the parish churches, especially financially. Over time, the income coming from property owned by the church diminished and the offerings, funeral payments and other gifts received by the parish churches became the most important portion of the abbey's income. This could add to our understanding of why the Ghent abbeys initiated, in an almost competition-like way, the erection of so many churches in a short period of time. Of course, a portion of the income was for the parish priest, usually chosen by the abbot, with or without the consent of the bishop. The portion allotted to the abbey changed over time and throughout many conflicts. At the beginning, one-third of the offerings was reserved for the priest and all other forms of income received by the parish church were for the abbey. In 1176, the priest obtained the right to keep half the offerings and everything that was given to them when visiting and anointing the sick, for baptisms and confessions, and the gifts of people on their deathbed. Funeral fees remained reserved for the abbey, but over time this was

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<sup>64</sup> Nolet and Boeren, *Kerkelijke Instellingen in de Middeleeuwen*, 37–38, 42–59, 66–79.

<sup>65</sup> Kümin, 'The English Parish in a European Perspective', 16. The German speaking area counted 59 and France 131 dioceses, while Italy contained a striking 253 bishoprics. In Italy the bishops had only small territories and they experienced a strong influence of the powerful city states.

<sup>66</sup> J.C.H. Blom and E. Lamberts, *Geschiedenis van de Nederlanden* (Baarn: Hbuitgevers, 2007), 84.

<sup>67</sup> Rogghé, 'Gent in de XIVe En XVe Eeuw. De Geestelijkheid En Haar Tijd', 109; Cloet, *Het Bisdom Gent (1559-1991). Vier Eeuwen Geschiedenis.*, 22–23.

also challenged by the parish priests and later by the regulars that established convents in Ghent at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>68</sup>

Not only did the nature of patronage fluctuate over time, but it was also different from place to place. Patrons could have more or less control over the parish and this influenced the bishop's role. In Ghent, the abbey of St Peter appointed the pastors of the principle churches of Our Lady, St John, St Nicolas and St James. And in Lille, the collegiate chapter of St Peter appointed all the incumbents of all the parishes of the city. The bishop's role was limited to a symbolic granting of pastoral care to the parish priest, whom he did not nominate. Even in Tournai, the capital of the bishopric, it was the cathedral chapter that nominated the pastors of the nine parishes on the left bank of the River Scheldt. Furthermore, the chapter had the right to grant them pastoral care, visit the churches, control the clergy, accept preachers, proclaim indulgences and oversee the maintenance and management of church buildings.<sup>69</sup>

### 1.2.3 Horizontal relations: the other ecclesiastical institutions in Ghent

During the boom of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, many new convents and monasteries were established in Ghent: by Franciscans, Dominicans, Penitents, Augustinians, Carmelites and Cistercians. Beguinages also flourished in this century: *Elisabethbegijnhof* in 1234, beguinage *Ter Hooie* in 1268 and *Poortakker* in 1278.<sup>70</sup> The next two centuries brought more religiosity in the form of Carthusians, St John's friars and nuns, Alexians and their female counterparts called the Black Sisters, *Grauwe Zusters* (Grey Sisters, third order of St Francis), Colettine Poor Clares, Canonesses Regular (Augustinian order), St John's knights, Brethren of the Common Life and more beguines. Furthermore, medieval Ghent had 11 hospitals and about 40 religious brotherhoods. The churches, abbeys and all these

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<sup>68</sup> De Clercq, 'De Kerkelijke Instellingen in Gent in Verband Met de Oudste Stedelijke Geschiedenis', 129; L. Reyntens, 'De S. Pietersabdij En de Gentse Parochiekerken. Ontstaan En Wederzijdse Strijd Om Hun Rechten', *Collationes Gandavenses* 2 (1951): 199–202; Walter Simons, *Stad En Apostolaat. De Vestiging van de Bedelorden in Het Graafschap Vlaanderen ca. 1225- ca. 1350*, vol. 49, Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie Voor Wetenschappen, Letteren En Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse Der Letteren 121 (Brussels: AWLSK (Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten), 1987).

<sup>69</sup> Jean Dumoulin, 'La Paroisse Urbaine à La Fin Du Moyen Âge. Le Cas de Quatre Villes de l'ancien Diocèse de Tournai: Bruges, Gand, Lille et Tournai', in *La Paroisse En Questions. Actes Du Colloque de Saint-Ghislain, 25 Novembre 1995*, ed. Yannick Coutiez and Daniel Van Overstraeten (Mons, Saint-Ghislain: Cercle royal d'histoire et d'archéologie, 1997), 99.

<sup>70</sup> Boone, 'Een Middeleeuwse Metropool', 55–56; Johan Decavele, 'De Geschoeide Karmelieten Te Gent (1272-1796)', *Kultureel Jaarboek Voor de Provincie Oost-Vlaanderen* 27, no. 2 (n.d.): 1–37.

initiatives and foundations strongly shaped Ghent and by around the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the city was home to about 4500 ecclesiastical figures.<sup>71</sup>

Again, what is interesting is the intertwinement of lay initiatives and their religious life with many of these institutions' foundations. The convent of the Augustinians, for example, was financially aided by Gerelmus Borluut, a nobleman of a wealthy Ghent family who had studied with the Augustinians in Paris. This gave him the symbolic title of "founder", even though the convent had been erected centuries earlier.<sup>72</sup> Members of various social groups gathered within the convents of the mendicants. The small guilds came together at the convent of the Augustinians. Gatherings of the smaller towns around Ghent and the castellanies of Flanders were held both at the Augustinians and the Dominicans. The latter order was also in charge of the safekeeping of the privileges of the butchers' guild, while the documents of the town's privileges were kept for a long period of time in the convent of the Franciscans. Both the Franciscans and Dominicans were paid by the magistracy to celebrate a daily mass at the chapel of the *schepenhuis* (aldermen's house). All four of the mendicant orders: the Carmelites, the Franciscans, the Dominicans and the Augustinians, received gifts and alms, often in the form of food, from the city.<sup>73</sup>

Whenever a new convent was established in Ghent, an agreement was made with the abbot who had jurisdiction over that area and the bishop. When the Carmelites came to St Michael's parish in 1272, it was agreed that if they wanted to preach or take confessions, they first had to ask permission from the bishop of Tournai. The agreement also stipulated that only brethren of their own order were to be buried in their churchyard. Furthermore, the church was only allowed one bell, which could be no bigger than that of the Dominicans and Franciscans. They had to be submissive to the abbot of St Bavon and the contract mentioned the annual gift of a golden obool to the abbey. As an obool only had the value of half a denier parisis, and was never in gold, this transaction must be understood figuratively. There were also some regulations governing their behaviour towards the parish of St Michael. Each year, on the feast of the church consecration, they had to assist the priests in the religious services. Besides these

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<sup>71</sup> Cloet, *Het Bisdom Gent (1559-1991). Vier Eeuwen Geschiedenis.*, 19–20; See also Ruben Mantels et al., eds., *Geloven in Gent: Plaatsen van Het Religieuze Verleden* (Ghent: Academia Press, 2015).

<sup>72</sup> Ambrosius Keelhoff, *Geschiedenis van Het Klooster Der Eerwaarde Paters Eremyten Augustynen Te Gent* (Ghent, 1864), 4–41; Simons, *Stad En Apostolaat. De Vestiging van de Bedelorden in Het Graafschap Vlaanderen ca. 1225- ca. 1350*, 49:153–154\*; See for more information on the family Borluut in Ghent: Frederik Buylaert, *Eeuwen van Ambitie. De Adel in Laadmiddellevens Vlaanderen*, vol. 21, *Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie Voor Wetenschappen, Letteren En Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse Der Letteren* (Brussels: Lannoo, 2010), 290–93. \*Indeed Keelhoff misinterpreted this title of "founder".

<sup>73</sup> Rogghé, 'Gent in de XIVe En XVe Eeuw. De Geestelijkheid En Haar Tijd', 128–32.



conditions, financial arrangements were made to compensate the parish church for the loss of income due to parishioners offering or leaving their legacy to the Carmelites.<sup>74</sup>

Other ecclesiastical institutions were also found within the boundaries of the St James parish. The abbot of the abbey of Baudeloo, which was situated outside Ghent near Sinaai, was allowed a refuge in the city near the Ottogracht from the second half of the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards.<sup>75</sup> From the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the St James parish housed a cloister of the *Grauwe Zusters*, a congregation of St Catherine also called the penitents. After a move to the parish of St John, they returned to St James at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The nuns followed the rules of poverty and focused on prayer and needlework, only accepting alms for their livelihood. They had a strong tie with the parish church as they washed the church linen and repaired the robes and other textiles. The churchwarden accounts are proof of this relationship. Another cloister in the parish in the 15<sup>th</sup> century was the convent of the Poor Clares. They lived in Goudstraat. Except for an occasional reference to a funeral of a parishioner in this convent, the Poor Clares are not mentioned in the accounts.<sup>76</sup>

The many different institutions did not always live peacefully alongside each other. The Franciscans, for example, came into conflict with the abbey at various times.<sup>77</sup> Some form of rivalry could also be seen between the mendicant orders and parish priests.<sup>78</sup> Even the peaceful *Grauwe Zusters* managed to come into conflict with the abbot of St Peter. When they built a chapel in 1462 without permission from the abbot, claiming the pope had given his consent 20 years earlier, a long discussion followed. In the end, the abbot allowed the nuns to build the chapel, but demanded they met specific conditions. They could not have a separate graveyard, nor build a bell tower, and the nuns had to make sure the parish church was not disadvantaged by their services. Furthermore, they had to visit the church of the abbey on the feast day of St Amalberga and offer a candle with a silver denier in it. Moreover, the contract between the abbot and the abbess stated that the sisters had to pray the Miserere at the grave of the last deceased abbot and pray and sing prayers at the funeral of every abbot and monk of the abbey.<sup>79</sup> Clearly, the abbey had

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<sup>74</sup> Decavele, 'De Geschoeide Karmelieten Te Gent (1272-1796)', 5.

<sup>75</sup> Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, 25–27, 83–85, 258–261(I).

<sup>76</sup> Verstraeten, 86, 263–266 (I). State Archives Ghent (RAG), *Oud archief van de kerkfabriek en parochie Sint-Jacobs te Gent (OKA St Jacobs Gent)*, no 362 (Churchwarden account), folio (fo) 15 recto (ro): "Ontfaen voor vier tortsen ghelevert inde uuijftaert ende begravinghe van de weduwe Straetmans tsente Claren begraven – VIII schellingen grooten". Documents numbered 341 to 514 are churchwarden accounts.

<sup>77</sup> Reyntens, 'De S. Pietersabdij En de Gentse Parochiekerken. Ontstaan En Wederzijdse Strijd Om Hun Rechten', 203–4.

<sup>78</sup> Rogghé, 'Gent in de XIVE En XVe Eeuw. De Geestelijkheid En Haar Tijd', 132.

<sup>79</sup> Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, 264.

an important say in most ecclesiastical matters and as the parish churches were an important source of income the abbey took measures to safeguard the central position of the parish church.

Another important institution in the parish of St James was St John's hospital, situated across from the church on Vlasmarkt. This was however not a purely ecclesiastical initiative but a mainly civic institution with some ecclesiastical ties. A limited number of poor, sick people and mentally ill people were taken care of by nuns and friars. In the oldest document of St John's, dating from 1196, both magistrates and clergy were mentioned as responsables.<sup>80</sup> The magistracy had a say in the workings and regulations of St John and they would sometimes take disciplinary measures. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the magistracy decided that only four friars and eight sisters would be allowed to work in the hospital. The practical organization was in the hands of one of the nuns, who was called the *meesterighe*. The nuns had their own chapel in the hospital, but attended mass in the church of St James on Sundays.<sup>81</sup>

### 1.3 Political Ghent

As we have seen, the abbeys had played a crucial role in the rise of Ghent. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, rich merchants gathered money to redeem the tallage (*landcijns*). The families that bought a part of the city in this way were known as *erfachtige lieden* or *viri hereditarii* in the following ages. This operation took Ghent out of the privileges of immunity of the abbeys and gave it judicial autonomy.<sup>82</sup> Between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century Ghent grew to become the most important and largest city in Northwest Europe, larger than Bruges, Louvain and Paris.<sup>83</sup> The population of Ghent increased rapidly, especially during the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It is estimated to have been about 64,000 in the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, but this was after crisis moments such as the plague and the famines of the first half of this century, so it is likely the population was even higher around 1300.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Jacqueline Dewulf, 'Visie Op En Maatschappelijke Positie van de Krankzinnige in de Middeleeuwen. Toetsing Aan de Hand van St. Jans Ten Dullen Te Gent 13e Tot 16e Eeuw.' (Master's Thesis, Ghent, Ghent University, 1981), 78–79.

<sup>81</sup> Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, 25–27, 83–85, 258–261(I).

<sup>82</sup> Declercq and Laleman, 'Archeologie van de stedelijke ruimte', 47–49.

<sup>83</sup> Boone, 'Een Middeleeuwse Metropool', 53.

<sup>84</sup> Boone, 58.

Ghent was also important in political terms. The counts of Flanders built and transformed the Gravensteen from the 9th century onwards and in 1360 the nearby Prinsenhof became the property of Count Lodewijk van Male and was used in the following ages as the main princely residences of the Burgundian dukes. On 24 February 1500, the future Emperor Charles V was born there.<sup>85</sup> While the counts insured that their power was also felt and respected in the town with the creation of the position of bailiff, Ghent gained the right to organize its own urban jurisdiction and government. The high bailiff's approval was needed for all the local legislation and regulations. However, conflicts about the competence and the election of the *schepenen* were a constant throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>86</sup>

From 1228 onwards, the magistrate could appoint five burghers who in turn elected another 34 members. This was the start of the rule of the XXXIX, an institution dominated by a select group of wealthy burghers, the *virī hereditarii* or *erfachtige lieden* mentioned above. Their power was diminished at the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century following pressure from new socio-economic groups and the reforms of Count Gwijde van Dampierre. The end of the system of the XXXIX was made official in 1301, when King Philip IV of France, then also ruler of Flanders, replaced it with a new political institution that would stay in place until 1540.<sup>87</sup>

Three members or socio-economic groups were of importance in this new political structure of Ghent. The first member consisted of the *poorterij*, a group of burghers of whom many were connected by family ties with the *erfachtige lieden*, while others were “new money”. They lived off the income from their properties in and outside Ghent. The second member grouped together 53 smaller crafts and the third member consisted of fullers (until 1349) and drapers. The latter was dominated by the guild of the weavers.<sup>88</sup> The members sat on two boards of aldermen: the *schepenen van de Keure*, who were responsible for the daily management of the city and law administration, and the *schepenen van Gedele*, who were responsible for specific social policies. The aldermen of the board of the *Keure* thus had judicial, executive and legislative authority. The magistrates of *Gedele* functioned as guardians of minor orphans and judges in a small

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<sup>85</sup> Boone, 56; Marc Boone and Thérèse de Hemptinne, ‘Espace Urbain et Ambitions Princières: Les Présences Matérielles de l'autorité Princièrè Dans Le Gand Médiéval (12e Siècle - 1540)’, in *Zeremoniell Und Raum*, ed. W. Paravicini, vol. 6, Residenzenforschung (4. Symposium der Residenzen-Kommission der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Sigmaringen: Thorbecke Verlag, 1997), 279–304.

<sup>86</sup> Johan Decavele, ‘Bestuursinstellingen van de Stad Gent (Eind 11de Eeuw-1795)’, in *De Gewestelijke En Lokale Overheidsinstellingen in Vlaanderen Tot 1795*, ed. Walter Prevenier and B. Augustyn (Brussels, 1997), 277, 286.

<sup>87</sup> Decavele, 277–78.

<sup>88</sup> Boone, ‘Een Middeleeuwse Metropool’, 69–75; Johan Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, Verhandeligen Der Maatschappij Voor Geschiedenis En Oudheidkunde Te Gent, XXVIII (Ghent: Academia Press, 2002), 514–15.

claims court (*vrederechters*). This was considered the lesser board, where aldermen started their careers. Successful political careers ended in higher positions in the more prestigious *schepensbank van de Keure*.<sup>89</sup> Unlike many other towns in Flanders, the prince had only limited power in the election of the magistracy.<sup>90</sup> Every year, the magistracy was renewed and new members of the boards were chosen by eight “voters” of whom four were appointed by the prince and four by the city.<sup>91</sup> The Ghent Collation or Broad Council (*Gentse Collatie* or *Brede Raad*) was a separate council and consultative body that was shaped in the mid-14<sup>th</sup> century. This institution consisted of a group of about 100 men who also represented the three members. Furthermore, most other institutions such as the lower courts, civil administration, poor relief and brotherhoods followed the same rules of participation and always represented the three members.<sup>92</sup>

The parishes, quarters and neighbourhoods of Ghent played a political-administrative role as well. The parish was firstly used as a division for military organization. Civic militias that protected the city in times of danger were formed by guild members and the *koninkstavelrijen*, which were military units of ten men created within the parish. Ten *koninkstavelrijen* (100 men) together formed *opperkoninkstavelrijen*. From 1319 onwards, assemblies of these armed militias gathered per parish at the Vrijdagmarkt. The leaders of the *opperkoninkstavelrijen* selected captains from each of the five central parishes of Ghent. These captains ruled Ghent in times of political crisis. This military function had faded somewhat by the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, with the rise of a professional army.<sup>93</sup> The parish could have a more administrative function as well: the territorial division of the city into parishes formed the basis for territorial units known as *kosterijen*. Whereas St John and St Michael were both divided into two *kosterijen*, St James and St Nicolas had one. Each *kosterij* had four *stadsvinders* who formed the lower courts (*smalle wetten*), which judged or mediated in disputes between Ghent burghers. These *vinders* had other administrative and financial functions as well. They aided in the division of the

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<sup>89</sup> Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 513; W.P. Blockmans, ‘Het Wisselingsproces van de Gentse Schepenen Tijdens de 15de Eeuw’, *Handelingen Der Maatschappij Voor Geschiedenis En Oudheidkunde Te Gent XXXXI* (1987): 77–84.

<sup>90</sup> Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 513. During the rule of Charles the Bold, from 1469 to 1477, the aldermen were directly chosen by his commissioners, but after his death this old procedure was reinstated.

<sup>91</sup> Mertens Jacques, ‘Brugge En Gent. De Vertegenwoordiging van de Leden in de Stadsmagistraat’, in *Liber Amicorum Dr. J. Decavele* (Ghent: Stichting Mens en Cultuur, 1996), 385–89; Decavele, ‘Bestuursinstellingen van de Stad Gent (Eind 11de Eeuw-1795)’, 278.

<sup>92</sup> Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 549; Johan Decavele, ed., *Gebuurtelevens En Dekenijen Te Gent. 14de-20ste Eeuw* (Ghent: Stadsarchief Gent, 1992), 13.

<sup>93</sup> Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent*, 48; Decavele, *Gebuurtelevens En Dekenijen Te Gent. 14de-20ste Eeuw*, 14.

population into the *koninkstavelrijen*. From the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the *opperkoninkstavelrijen* that were grouped per parish functioned as a base for the collection of certain taxes.<sup>94</sup>

Whereas the *koninkstavelrijen* had been formed top-down, the emergence of neighbourhoods was less official and more organic. Just like the parish they had a religious, social and practical role. Over time, the neighbourhoods served other “official” functions such as taking care of the census, fire safety, night guard duty, street lights and street maintenance. At least from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the deans of the neighbourhoods recorded their financial transactions in accounts. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the magistrates of Ghent considered the neighbourhoods more and more as a handy city service that could be enlisted for all kinds of public needs in their respective areas.<sup>95</sup>

Throughout the Middle Ages, Flanders and especially Ghent was regarded by the counts and rulers of the Netherlands as stubborn and rebellious. Ghent’s wealth, size, political privileges and relative autonomy gave the city a pride and boldness that led to clashes with the central government on several occasions.<sup>96</sup> With the Caroline Concession in 1540, Charles V’s punishment for Ghent’s rebellion, the lines of city politics were redrawn.<sup>97</sup> The guilds played a much smaller part in the decision-making process in Ghent after 1540, as the emperor had abolished the system of the three members and ruled that only dignitaries could become aldermen. However, burghers and dignitaries could be members of the crafts as well and thus members of guilds were not excluded from Ghent politics.<sup>98</sup>

The role of the parish as a political entity increased as the Collation, the large city council, was thoroughly reformed. After 1540, the participation of the three members in

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<sup>94</sup> Decavele, *Gebuurteleven En Dekenijen Te Gent. 14de-20ste Eeuw*, 13–14.

<sup>95</sup> Vervaeke, ‘De Gebuurten Te Gent’, 6–12.

<sup>96</sup> Marc Boone, ‘Les Républiques Calvinistes et La Tradition Médiévale Des Révoltes Urbaines Dans Les Pays-Bas’, in *Des Villes En Révolte. Les ‘Républiques Urbaines’ Aux Pays-Bas et En France Pendant La Deuxième Moitié Du XVIe Siècle*, ed. Monique Weis, *Studies in European Urban History (1100-1800)* 23 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 7–23; Boone, ‘Urban Space and Political Conflict in Late Medieval Flanders’; Marc Boone, ‘Législation Communale et Ingérence Princière: La “restriction” de Charles Le Téméraire Pour La Ville de Gand (13 Juillet 1468)’, in *Faire Bans, Edictz et Statuz. Légiférer Dans La Ville Médiévale. Sources, Objects, Acteurs de l’activité Législative Communale En Occident, ca. 1200-1500*, ed. J.-M. Cauchies and E. Bousmar (Brussels, 2001), 139–51; Jan Dumolyn, ‘Privileges and Novelties: The Political Discourse of the Flemish Cities and Rural Districts in Their Negotiations with the Dukes of Burgundy (1384-1506)’, *Urban History* 35, no. 1 (2008): 5–23; Jan Dumolyn and Jelle Haemers, ‘Patterns of Urban Rebellion in Medieval Flanders’, *Journal of Medieval History* 31 (2005): 369–93; W.P. Blockmans, ‘Autocratie Ou Polyarchie? La Lutte Pour Le Pouvoir Politique En Flandre de 1482 à 1492, d’Après Des Documents Inédits’, *Handelingen van de Koninklijke Commissie Voor Geschiedenis* XCL (1974): 257–368.

<sup>97</sup> Arnade, ‘Privileges and the Political Imagination in the Ghent Revolt of 1539’, 103, 122.

<sup>98</sup> Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 511, 530, 534–35.

the council ended. Instead, 42 Collation lords: six from each of the seven city parishes seated in the council. They were appointed by the high bailiff and the *schepenen* and worked in rotation throughout the year. Apart from these 42 Collation lords, the 52 aldermen of the previous two years were also members of this council.<sup>99</sup> The council seemed to be the same institution in terms of numbers, but it functioned completely differently. Moreover, the position of the bailiff, the representative of the prince, was strengthened after Charles V's intervention. In addition to the bailiff's legislative function, his judicial role was enhanced. With the exception of the period of Calvinist rule, which we will discuss later, the Caroline Concession remained the basis of Ghent politics until the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>100</sup>

The jurisdiction of Ghent was not limited to the city itself. A large amount of property outside Ghent had been obtained by Ghent *poorters* (burghers) throughout the 14<sup>th</sup> century. As a result, the jurisdiction of the *schepenen* stretched across the borders of the city to cover the whole "Ghent quarter". This area consisted of the castellany (*kasselrij*) of Oudburg, the city and castellany of Kortrijk, the city and castellany of Oudenaarde, the town of Biervliet, the *Vier Ambachten* (Four Amts), namely Axel, Hulst, Boekhout and Assenede, the Land van Waas, the Land van Aalst with the towns Aalst and Geraardsbergen, and the town and Land of Dendermonde. The quarter was an important delineation, especially in fiscal and judicial matters. The count also acknowledged this sphere of influence over the large cities. Furthermore, Ghent's function as head of the quarter led to it playing an important political role in the *Vier Leden van Vlaanderen* (Four Members of Flanders), a representative institution that also included Bruges, Ypres and the Franc of Bruges.<sup>101</sup>

## 1.4 Reformation, revolt and restoration

This system of interwoven ecclesiastical and political institutions in Ghent underwent far-reaching changes during the last decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. How these changes affected the St James parish is central to this thesis and will be discussed in the following chapters. This chapter will give an overview of the main events and developments that impacted religious and political affairs in the Netherlands and Ghent.

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<sup>99</sup> Dambruyne, 550.

<sup>100</sup> Decavele, 'Bestuursinstellingen van de Stad Gent (Eind 11de Eeuw-1795)', 279, 286.

<sup>101</sup> Decavele, 290–91.

Since 1550, the spread of reformation ideas had accelerated in the Netherlands, despite the anti-heresy placards of Charles V. By then, Lutheran, mennonite and especially Calvinist opinions were held and debated by a large minority of the population, especially in urban areas.<sup>102</sup> Between 1540 and 1550, Charles V had reinforced the general repression of heretics. Many more moderate punishments were replaced by the death penalty and no requests for pardon were possible.<sup>103</sup> However, the many edicts issued by the emperor did not always have the intended effect, as they had to be ratified by the provincial councils as well. The provincial courts of Zeeland, Holland and Frisia as well as of Brabant and Flanders and local magistrates did not always agree to issue these edicts. The Low Countries were far from unified in their views on the anti-heresy policy, but in Flanders a repressive climate ruled.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, the policies of Philip II, who became the new sovereign after the resignation of his father Charles V in 1555, further polarized the situation.<sup>105</sup>

In Ghent, the city council, the Council of Flanders and later also the inquisitor Pieter Titelmans were at work in the repression of heresy. Between 1530 and 1595 a total of 252 people were sentenced to death. Especially the anabaptists were considered the most dangerous heretics as they were linked to political rebellion. Indeed of the 252 executed protestants, 146 were anabaptists. The Vrijdagmarkt was the usual place of execution (burning at the stake) for prisoners of Ghent sentenced to death by the magistrates. Those sentenced by the Council of Flanders were put to death on the St Veerleplein. Male heretics that showed remorse were beheaded while female dissidents were usually drowned. Other means of execution were hanging, usually outside the city walls or buried alive. This repression, however, did not stop the spread of protestantism. Especially the well organized Calvinists grew strongly and could take advantage of local political

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<sup>102</sup> For more information on the Revolt in the Low Countries see: Alastair Duke, *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries* (London: Hambledon Press, 1990); Wayne P. Te Brake, *Religious War and Religious Peace in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); Johan Decavele, *De Dageraad van de Reformatie in Vlaanderen (1520-1565)*, vol. 1, 2 vols, *Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie Voor Wetenschappen, Letteren En Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse Der Letteren* 76 (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1975); Johan Decavele, *De Eerste Protestanten in de Lage Landen. Geloof En Heldenmoed* (Louvain: Uitgeverij Davidsfonds NV, 2004); Joke Spaans, 'Reform in the Low Countries', in *A Companion to the Reformation World*, ed. R. Po-Chia Hsia (Malden, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2004), 118–34; Guido Marnef, *Antwerp in the Age of Reformation. Underground Protestantism in a Commercial Metropolis 1550-1577*, *The Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science* (Baltimore, London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

<sup>103</sup> Alain Lottin, *La révolte des Gueux en Flandre, Artois et Hainaut*, *Collection Histoire - Les Echos du Pas-de-Calais* (Lillers: Les Echos du Pas-de-Calais, 2007), 26.

<sup>104</sup> Gert Gielis and Violet Soen, 'The Inquisitorial Office in the Sixteenth-Century Habsburg Low Countries: A Dynamic Perspective', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* forthcoming (n.d.): 7; Te Brake, *Religious War and Religious Peace in Early Modern Europe*, 94.

<sup>105</sup> Te Brake, *Religious War and Religious Peace in Early Modern Europe*, 94.

oppositon to the central government to gain sympathy and even receive political protection in certain areas. From 1560 onwards protestantism in Ghent was mainly of Calvinist nature, but it was only by 1566 that they could organize a consistory (protestant church council) and have a fixed preacher.<sup>106</sup>

### 1.4.1 New bishoprics in the Netherlands

Not only did Charles V and Philip II fight heresy with repression. But they also tried to redivide the Catholic landscape in the Low Countries with the formation of new bishoprics, another initiative to stop the spread of heretical ideas and gain more control over the bishops in the Low Countries. The Council of Trent was also important to these sovereigns, as it would reform the Catholic Church and so remove many of the problems in the Church. The council did not reach a conclusion quickly and between 1545 and 1563 it gathered in various sessions in Trent and Bologna.<sup>107</sup> Moreover, implementing the decrees was not an easy or straightforward process. It led to many discussions, especially when the interests of ecclesiastical and secular institutions – particularly financial ones – were at stake. As a result, the publication of the new decrees was delayed in many regions.<sup>108</sup>

The implementation of the Tridentine decrees and the fight against heresy went hand in hand with the reorganization of the dioceses in the Low Countries in 1559. This reorganization did not come out of nowhere. Already in 1525-1530, some attempts had been made to establish six new bishoprics in the Low Countries. In 1551-1552, a

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<sup>106</sup> Johan Decavele and Dirk Coigneau, eds., *Het Eind van Een Rebelse Droom. Opstellen over Het Calvinistisch Bewind Te Gent (1577-1584) En de Terugkeer van de Stad Onder de Gehoorzaamheid van de Koning van Spanje (17 September 1584)* (Ghent: Stadsbestuur Gent, 1984), 18–22.

<sup>107</sup> For more on the council of Trent see: Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils. Volume II (Trent-Vatican II)* (Washington: Georgetown University Press, 1990); John W. O'Malley, *Trent. What Happened at the Council* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013); Michela Catto and Adriano Prosperi, eds., *Trent and beyond. The Council, Other Powers, Other Cultures*, Mediterranean Nexus 1100-1700 4 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017); Wim François and Violet Soen, eds., *The Council of Trent: Reform and Controversy in Europe and Beyond (1545-1700)*, Vol. 1: *Between Trent, Rome and Wittenberg*, vol. 1, 3 vols, Refo500 Academic Studies 35 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018); Wim François and Violet Soen, eds., *The Council of Trent: Reform and Controversy in Europe and Beyond (1545-1700)*, Vol. 2: *Between Bishops and Princes*, vol. 2, 3 vols, Refo500 Academic Studies 35 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018).

<sup>108</sup> Soen, *Vredehandel. Adellijke En Habsburgse Verzoeningspogingen Tijdens de Nederlandse Opstand.*, 44; F. Willocx, *L'introduction Des Décrets Du Concile de Trente Dans Les Pays-Bas et Dans La Principauté de Liège* (Louvain: Librairie Universitaire, 1929).



commission appointed by Charles V asserted that Catholicism in Ghent was deteriorating because of the lack of a bishop and knowledgeable ecclesiastical figures.<sup>109</sup>

Indeed, the spread of Reformation ideas had altered the religious landscape and presented a strong challenge to Catholicism. The principle of *Cuius regio, eius religio*, as set out in the Peace of Augsburg of 1555 for the German-speaking states of the Holy Roman Empire, allowed the region's princes to decide if their territory would be Catholic or Protestant. This illustrates the intertwining of religion and government and explains why the Habsburg overlord resisted any challenge to Catholicism in the Low Countries. But the call for a Ghent bishop had preceded the Reformation. The rearrangement of the dioceses and bishops' sees would have been a logical follow-up to the demographic and political changes that the Netherlands had undergone in the previous ages. And for the Burgundian dukes who had united the different regions of the Low Countries and centralized political power, the influence of "foreign" bishops in their territories was a thorn in their side.<sup>110</sup>

Also, the bishops themselves were in favour of a redivision. Francis Sonnius was most likely behind the plan for the reorganization drafted in 1551-1552. However, this plan to divide the Low Countries into 11 to 12 bishoprics, including two archdioceses, was not ready for discussion during the second round of the Council of Trent. A few years later, Sonnius' plans for the reorganization of the dioceses had matured and Philip II gave him instructions to promote the redivision to the pope. For Sonnius, this seemed to merge with his hope to remodel the inquisitorial office and make it subordinate to the bishop's authority. He would reside in Rome for more than a year and successfully discuss the plans with the pope.<sup>111</sup>

After a lot of secret preparations and lobbying in Rome, on 12 May 1559 Pope Paul IV (1555-1559) announced the reorganization of the dioceses of the Netherlands, which was registered in the bull *Super Universas*. The bull outlined the transformation of the old dioceses and the division of the Netherlands into 14 bishoprics and three archdioceses, namely Mechelen, Cambrai and Utrecht. The king received the right to nominate the bishop, except in Cambrai, but the pope had to ratify the nomination before the bishop

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<sup>109</sup> Guido Marnef, 'Een Nieuw Bisdom in Troebele Tijden. Vanaf de Oprichting Tot Het Episcopaat van Willem van Bergen', in *In de Stroom van de Tijd. (4)50 Jaar Bisdom Antwerpen*, ed. Marcel Gielis et al. (Louvain: Davidsfonds Uitgeverij nv, 2012), 62; Cloet, *Het Bisdom Gent (1559-1991). Vier Eeuwen Geschiedenis.*, 19-20.

<sup>110</sup> Blom and Lamberts, *Geschiedenis van de Nederlanden*, 84; S.J. Dierickx, *De oprichting der nieuwe bisdommen in de Nederlanden onder Filips II 1559-1570* (Antwerp, Utrecht: Standaard Boekhandel, 1950), 30-32; Marnef, 'Een Nieuw Bisdom in Troebele Tijden. Vanaf de Oprichting Tot Het Episcopaat van Willem van Bergen', 39-40.

<sup>111</sup> Gielis and Soen, 'The Inquisitorial Office in the Sixteenth-Century Habsburg Low Countries: A Dynamic Perspective', 14-15; Marnef, 'Een Nieuw Bisdom in Troebele Tijden. Vanaf de Oprichting Tot Het Episcopaat van Willem van Bergen', 39; Guido Marnef, 'Een Maat Voor Niets? De Episcopaten van Granvelle En Hauchin (1559-1596)', in *Het Aartsbisdom Mechelen-Brussel. 450 Jaar Geschiedenis*, vol. 1 (Antwerp: Halewijn, 2009), 63-64.

could start his episcopacy.<sup>112</sup> However, as stated above, the reorganization was not just a political move. Its purpose was also to help the execution of the reforms planned by the Catholic Church. Both the higher ecclesiastical and secular powers were convinced that a more efficient church structure would provide protection against heresy.<sup>113</sup>

The archdiocese of Mechelen (Malines) presided over the bishoprics of Ghent, Bruges, Ypres, Antwerp, 's-Hertogenbosch and Roermond. Mechelen would have primacy over the other dioceses and thus have a leading role in councils and ecclesiastical gatherings in the Netherlands. The bishop of Arras, former chancellor of Charles V and confidant of Philip II, Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle, was nominated archbishop of this new archdiocese. He would be one of the first bishops to assume office. He had already been a member of the Council of State since 1555 and he was the most important advisor of the governor-general Margaret of Parma. His nomination illustrates the important political consequences of the redivision of the dioceses, which tightened the grip of the king over the Low Countries. In February 1561, Granvelle was also appointed a cardinal. While he was already more a statesman than a bishop, the archbishop now had precedence over other dignitaries during public meetings.<sup>114</sup>

### The new bishopric of Ghent

Pope Pius IV's issue of the bull *Regimini Universalis* resulted in 1561 in the creation of the new bishopric of Ghent, encompassing 182 parishes of the old dioceses of Tournai, Utrecht and Cambrai. The city of Ghent became the new centre of the bishopric and the newly founded St Bavon's chapter was transformed into the cathedral chapter.<sup>115</sup>

However, the continuing delays in installing a bishop meant that it was many years before the diocese of Ghent functioned properly. When on 30 July 1564 the king sent a decree to the Netherlands accepting the Council of Trent's regulations, there was still no bishop in Ghent.<sup>116</sup> The difficulties in establishing the new diocese of Ghent and the

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<sup>112</sup> Cloet, *Het Bisdom Gent (1559-1991). Vier Eeuwen Geschiedenis.*, 19, 24, 26; Willocx, *L'introduction Des Décrets Du Concile de Trente Dans Les Pays-Bas et Dans La Principauté de Liège*, 151-52; Guido Marnef, 'Een Maat Voor Niets? De Episcopaten van Granvelle En Hauchin (1559-1596)', 67.

<sup>113</sup> Gert Gielis, "'Providere Ovibus Bonum et Diligentem Pastorem". Hoe Lovanienses de Nieuwe Bisdommen Modelleerden, 1545-1570', forthcoming, 1; Bauwens, 'Restoration and Reform of the Parish after Trent. The Case of St James in Ghent (1561-1630)', 2017.

<sup>114</sup> Guido Marnef, 'Een Maat Voor Niets? De Episcopaten van Granvelle En Hauchin (1559-1596)', 67-72.

<sup>115</sup> Cloet, *Het Bisdom Gent (1559-1991). Vier Eeuwen Geschiedenis.*, 19, 24, 26; Bauwens, 'Restoration and Reform of the Parish after Trent. The Case of St James in Ghent (1561-1630)', 2017.

<sup>116</sup> Soen, *Vredehandel. Adellijke En Habsburgse Verzoeningspogingen Tijdens de Nederlandse Opstand.*, 43-44; Gielis and Soen, 'The Inquisitorial Office in the Sixteenth-Century Habsburg Low Countries: A Dynamic Perspective', 3; Willocx, *L'introduction Des Décrets Du Concile de Trente Dans Les Pays-Bas et Dans La Principauté de Liège*, 61-68.; RAG, *Bisdom Gent*, 020/K 19148 nf; In their article Gielis and Soen discuss the different and changing nature of the Inquisition in the Netherlands.

overall implementation of the Tridentine decrees in the Netherlands were not just the result of the usual complexities involved in restructuring institutions. Politically and religiously motivated protests also contributed to the problems, leading to a long process of conflict and negotiation between the central government in Spain and the members of various political and ecclesiastical institutions in the Low Countries.<sup>117</sup>

The reorganization of the dioceses was one of the provocations leading to the political-religious troubles that arose in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and started the Revolt. Protest hindered the implementation of the bull *Regimini Universalis*, the appointment of bishops dragged on in certain provinces, sometimes taking until 1570 before the bishop could take up his position. There was also a long delay in the arrival of the first bishop of Ghent. In 1562, the king had nominated the abbot of St Peter's abbey of Ghent, Francis van Haveroult, as bishop, but this was never ratified by the pope. In 1564, Haveroult gave up the episcopal chair.<sup>118</sup> The conditions for candidate bishops imposed by the Council of Trent complicated matters further. It had decreed, amongst other things, that candidates must have a university degree in theology or church law. The provincial council had to work out the finer points of the Tridentine regulation. In 1570, Malines accepted the detailed prescriptions of the council of Cambrai (1565), but procedures concerning the nomination were not fully settled until the 1620s.<sup>119</sup>

### 1.4.2 Revolt

Apart from the discontent of many nobles with the repression, the reorganization of the dioceses in the Netherlands and the expansion of central power under the rule of King Philip II were perceived as an attack on local privileges and the nobles' already decreasing political powers. Also, Protestants who had already complained about the repression helped spread the idea that the "Spanish Inquisition" was going to be introduced in the Netherlands through the redivision of the bishoprics. They clearly believed that the new bishops and the implementation of the Tridentine decrees would strengthen the repression.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Bauwens, 'Restoration and Reform of the Parish after Trent. The Case of St James in Ghent (1561-1630)', 2017.

<sup>118</sup> Cloet, *Het Bisdom Gent (1559-1991)*. *Vier Eeuwen Geschiedenis*, 27; Gielis and Soen, 'The Inquisitorial Office in the Sixteenth-Century Habsburg Low Countries: A Dynamic Perspective', 16.

<sup>119</sup> Cloet, *Het Bisdom Gent (1559-1991)*. *Vier Eeuwen Geschiedenis*, 29, 30.

<sup>120</sup> Gielis and Soen, 'The Inquisitorial Office in the Sixteenth-Century Habsburg Low Countries: A Dynamic Perspective', 15-16; Soen, *Vredehandel. Adellijke En Habsburgse Verzoeningspogingen Tijdens de Nederlandse Opstand*, 41-42; Gielis, "'Providere Ovibus Bonum et Diligentem Pastorem". Hoe Lovanienses de Nieuwe Bisdommen Modelleerden, 1545-1570', 1.

The three nobles Lamoral, the Count of Egmont, William of Orange and Philip de Montmorency, the Count of Horn, became central figures in the protest that was at this stage being handled diplomatically. However, the king's rigid stance further reinforced the opposition. In November 1565, reform-minded members of the lesser nobility initiated what became known as the Compromise of the Nobles, to set up an organized opposition to the oppression of Protestants in the Low Countries. The high nobility did not join in this Compromise, but protested by threatening to resign. Simultaneously, they took initiatives to reconcile the opposing parties.<sup>121</sup>

At the beginning of 1566, rumours that armed nobles would march to Brussels persuaded governor-general Margaret of Parma to prepare the armed forces, the so-called *bandes d'ordonnance*, for possible mobilization. However, diplomacy was her first choice. From 27 March to 10 April 1566, she held crisis meetings in Brussels with the Council of State, the stadholders and the Knights of the Golden Fleece. When on 5 April the Compromise petition was presented to Margaret of Parma, she could immediately inform the nobles that the meetings had agreed on a religious moderation. The Catholic religion remained sacred, but they had decided to abolish the position of inquisitor and also differentiate the punishments for heresy, depending on the confession, age and gender of the dissident. Of course, at this stage this Moderation had not been approved by the king.<sup>122</sup> By July and August 1566, he had agreed to some of the requests of Margaret of Parma, but he made it clear that he did not accept the Moderation as a whole. However, in the meantime, the Moderation, as it had been accepted in the Netherlands, had encouraged the reform-minded. The practice of preaching in the open air, known as hedge preaching, increased after the acceptance of the Moderation.<sup>123</sup>

Afraid that the situation would deteriorate and that the Compromise of the Nobles would become more militant, Margaret of Parma promised the nobles, in exchange for their loyalty to the king and the Catholic faith, *lettres d'assurance*. This gave them the assurance that they would be treated as loyal subjects. However, when the leaders of the Compromise took the oath on 25 August, the situation in the Netherlands had escalated. On 10 August 1566 violence erupted in Walloon Flanders, marking the start of a wave of iconoclasm that spread throughout the Netherlands.<sup>124</sup> When the destruction reached Ghent on 22 August, outbursts of iconoclasm had been raging through Flanders for 12

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<sup>121</sup> Soen, *Vredehandel. Adellijke En Habsburgse Verzoeningspogingen Tijdens de Nederlandse Opstand.*, 41–42, 45–47, 50–60; Gielis and Soen, 'The Inquisitorial Office in the Sixteenth-Century Habsburg Low Countries: A Dynamic Perspective', 17.

<sup>122</sup> Soen, *Vredehandel. Adellijke En Habsburgse Verzoeningspogingen Tijdens de Nederlandse Opstand.*, 60–63.

<sup>123</sup> Soen, 64–67.

<sup>124</sup> Violet Soen, 'Between Dissent and Peacemaking. The Dutch Nobility on the Eve of the Revolt (1564-1567)', *Belgisch Tijdschrift Voor Filologie En Geschiedenis* 86 (2008): 738.

days.<sup>125</sup> There had already been Calvinist preaching in many areas in July, but after the iconoclasm hedge preaching increased and spread to new areas. More details on the iconoclasm and hedge preaching in Ghent are given in the following chapters.

As a result of the Troubles, Philips II revised its policy for the Netherlands. At the end of November the army was put under the supervision of Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, the Duke of Alva. In December 1566, the king annulled the *lettres d'assurance* and adopted a strategy of divide and rule. By 3 January 1567, all office holders, including the stadholders and Knights of the Golden Fleece, had been ordered by Margaret of Parma to renew their oath of loyalty to the king. Their response was divided. The nobles Orange, Horn and Hoogstraten did not renew their oath. Egmont did after a while and Horn relented two months later. Despite these oaths, on 24 March Alva received permission to punish the knights he considered responsible for the Troubles. Even the highest nobles of the Netherlands were no longer safe. The council of troubles demanded the arrest of Horn and Egmont and later Montigny and sentenced them to death.<sup>126</sup>

Many others became the victim of punishment by Alva or his Council of Troubles. It conducted at least eight thousand trials and executed a thousand people, even Catholics. Alastair Duke and Aline Goosens even counted 11.000 trials.<sup>127</sup> In the end, the repression of Alva and his army would further polarize the situation in the Netherlands. In fact, his intolerance fuelled the civil war, later known as the Dutch Revolt, which would influence European politics for the next 80 years. In Flanders, the growing discontent would go underground for several years and then erupt in the late 1570s, especially after the Pacification of Ghent (1576).<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Jozef Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Louvain, Catholic University of Louvain, 1971), 54; Jozef Scheerder, *De Beeldenstorm*, 2nd ed. (Bussum: Unieboek b.v., 1978).

<sup>126</sup> Soen, *Vredehandel. Adellijke en Habsburgse verzoeningspogingen tijdens de Nederlandse Opstand.*, 70-75; For a new perspective on the iconoclasm: David de Boer, "Picking up the Pieces. Catholic Perceptions of Iconoclasm in the Netherlands, 1566-1672" (Master's Thesis, Utrecht University, 2013); For Ghent: Tom Van Ermen, "Beeldenstorm in het zestiende-eeuwse Gent. Een historisch-antropologische studie naar de katholieke passiviteit in de Nederlanden" (Master's Thesis, Ghent University, 2008).

<sup>127</sup> Craig Harline and Eddy Put, *A Bishop's Tale. Mathias Hovius among His Flock in Seventeenth-Century Flanders* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 13; Te Brake, *Religious War and Religious Peace in Early Modern Europe*; Alastair Duke, 'Salvation by Coercion: The Controversy Surrounding the "Inquisition" in the Low Countries on the Eve of the Revolt', in *Reformation Principle and Practice*, ed. Peter Newman Brooks (London: Scholar Press, 1980), 135-56; Aline Goosens, *Les Inquisitions Modernes Dans Les Pays-Bas Méridionaux (1520-1633). 2: Les Victimes* (Brussels: Ed. de l'Université de Bruxelles, 1998).

<sup>128</sup> For more information on the iconoclasm and the Dutch Revolt see Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots. The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt*; Peter Limm, *The Dutch Revolt, 1559-1648* (London: Longman, 1989); Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*; Soen, 'Between Dissent and Peacemaking. The Dutch Nobility on the Eve of the Revolt (1564-1567)'; Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall 1477-1806* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567'; Bauwens, 'Restoration and Reform of the Parish after Trent. The Case of St James in Ghent (1561-1630)', 2017.

In 1576, the sudden death of Luis de Requesens, who had succeeded Alva as governor, created a power vacuum. The Spanish troops mutinied and the Council of State was unable to keep control of the provinces. In order to stabilize the situation, the provincial States of Brabant took over governmental powers and with the support of the States of Flanders and Hainaut it summoned the States General. This form of action was illegal, as only the king could call for a gathering of the States General, but nevertheless it worked. In October, there were negotiations in Ghent between the loyal states and the rebellious states. These would lead to the Pacification of Ghent on 8 November 1576. An important feature of this treaty was that it stressed the idea of a unified and peaceful Netherlands (17 provinces), which demanded the withdrawal of the Spanish troops. Religious questions had been avoided, but it was made clear that Zeeland and Holland would remain Protestant while all persecution on the basis of religion was to be ended.<sup>129</sup>

The next governor, Don Juan of Austria, was unable to revoke the Pacification, nor could he keep to the treaty, which caused discord with the States General in December 1577. Ghent took advantage of the lack of central power to reform the politics and the public space of the city, thus trying to undo the humiliation of the Caroline Concession. The military citadel built at the request of Charles V had already been attacked and captured by the people of Ghent. It was called the Spanish Castle because it had housed the Spanish garrison since 1567 and was thus not only a symbol of persecution and loss of privileges, but also a real financial burden on the city. On 21 August 1577, the States General consented to the destruction of the citadel.<sup>130</sup> While in the higher political circles opposition to the rebellion became more organized under the leadership of the duke of Aarschot, Ghent joined in the rebellion enthusiastically.<sup>131</sup> Soon afterwards, the Collation of Ghent demanded the restoration of the urban privileges from before 1540. Most likely, they hoped these would aid the poor economic climate. Again the States General allowed this change, but the Duke of Aarschot, the new governor of Flanders, refused to officially confirm the old privileges. As a consequence, he and other noblemen loyal to the king were captured and imprisoned in Ghent by François van den Kethulle, lord of Ryhove, on the night of 28 October 1577. Ryhove staged a coup to force political revolution in Ghent.

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<sup>129</sup> Johan Decavele, ed., *Eenheid En Scheiding in de Nederlanden 1555-1585* (Ghent: Stad Gent, 1976), 197; Johan Decavele, *Vlaanderen Tussen Spanje En Oranje. Willem de Zwijger En de Lage Landen in de Zestiende Eeuw* (Ghent: Stadsarchief en Museum Arnold Vander Haeghen, 1984), 79–84; Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, 'A Religious Republic and Fortress', in *Ghent, A City of All Times* (Ghent: STAM, 2010), 109–10.

<sup>130</sup> Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 644–47. This would happen only partly as the outer side was used in the construction of the rampart.

<sup>131</sup> Decavele, *Vlaanderen Tussen Spanje En Oranje. Willem de Zwijger En de Lage Landen in de Zestiende Eeuw*, 87.

Indeed, a few days later the system of the three members was re-introduced.<sup>132</sup> On 1 November 1577, a group of 18 men known as the Committee of XVIII was installed along the lines of the committee in Brussels. By January 1578, the magistracy had been renewed according to Ghent's old customs, while the committee remained in existence. There was a religious flavour to the proceedings, as of the eight voters, five were Calvinist and three Catholic. Also, at least 19 of the 26 *schepenen* were Calvinist. Many other functions were reserved for Calvinists as well. The religious purification gathered pace quickly. After 18 July 1578, all important functions were for Calvinists only. The Collation retained its importance during this period and even had a say in the composition of the Committee of XVIII. After some time the power of the committee decreased and in 1579 it was abolished.<sup>133</sup>

Ghent was, compared to other rebellious cities in Flanders and Brabant, the most radical, both in terms of politics and religion.<sup>134</sup> On 6 August 1579, Ghent renounced Philip II as its king and declared that control of the city was now fully in the hands of the magistracy. This was thus a step further than the *Plakkaat van Verlatinghe* (Act of Abjuration) that would be issued by the States General two years later. Ghent declared itself an independent republic.<sup>135</sup> The politician Jan van Hembyze claimed he wanted to make Ghent a second Geneva but the city was, according to Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, never a fully independent republic. For example, in 1582 Ghent staged a Joyous Entry for François of Anjou.<sup>136</sup>

During the first months after the political coup, both Catholics and Protestants had been allowed to practice their faith. From the beginning of 1578, the situation became difficult for Catholics and impossible for the clergy. The clergy had lost their privileged status from the beginning, but after 1578 they were also persecuted in many ways. Between May and August 1578, new iconoclasm struck convents and churches. Religious buildings were closed down or used for other purposes, goods were confiscated and sold. Groups of mendicants were burnt at the stake because of accusations of sodomy. During the first year of the Calvinist Regime, most Flemish cities, even Bruges and Kortrijk, came under military pressure from Ghent. The political facet of the Republic was evident, as in all these places the magistracy was renewed in line with that of Ghent. These political

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<sup>132</sup> Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 647–48; Van Bruaene, 'A Religious Republic and Fortress', 110.

<sup>133</sup> Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 655–57.

<sup>134</sup> Dambruyne, 660.

<sup>135</sup> Marc Boone, 'Omzien Met Bewondering, Vooruitblikken Met Verwachting. De Gentse Geschiedenis van Middeleeuwen En Ancien Régime', *Handelingen Der Maatschappij Voor Geschiedenis En Oudheidkunde Te Gent XLVII* (1993): 34.

<sup>136</sup> Van Bruaene, 'A Religious Republic and Fortress', 110–11.

measures were closely intertwined with religious motives. In most towns a Calvinist church organization was set up or at least Calvinist preaching was organized.<sup>137</sup>

Within the renewed Calvinist government, two groups could be discerned; a moderate Calvinist party that was prepared to make compromises and a radical group, led by Jan van Hembyze, that refused to follow the stipulations of William of Orange, the governor of Flanders, Duke Matthias of Austria and the States General. The radical group refused to accept the religious peace that was accepted in July 1578 by Duke Matthias and the States General. However, by the end of 1578, the moderate faction had gained popularity and with the visit of William of Orange to Ghent, 18 articles of the religious peace were promulgated. The churches of Ghent were subsequently divided among the Calvinists and Catholics. The reformed-minded could use the parish churches of St John (St Bavon), Holy Christ and Our Lady, the convent churches of the Dominicans and the Carmelites and the chapels of the fullers and weavers. Catholics had at their disposal the parish churches of St Michael, St Nicholas, St Pharahild, St James and St Catherine's chapel.<sup>138</sup>

However, this religious peace would not last long. The radical Jan van Hembyze, who was the first alderman on the board of the *Keure*, was the main opponent to this peace. Despite growing opposition to his policies, he managed to keep his position for several months. When Ghent joined the Union of Utrecht on 4 February 1579, the situation worsened for the Catholics. In March, 16 prominent Catholics were imprisoned and another iconoclasm followed. After this, the churches would remain closed and Catholic worship was forbidden. By April of that year the four mendicant orders had been expelled from the city. Ordinary Catholics were left alone, however. This was partly the result of a political shift. In August 1579, Hembyze, seeing the growing opposition to his policies, left Ghent. After him the more moderate François van den Kethule, lord of Ryhove, became the leading figure in Ghent. It was only during the last year of the Republic that Jan van Hembyze was recalled to Ghent and religious persecution increased. Nevertheless, his rule ended quickly and in the end he was put on trial for treason. For a short while, the moderate party led Ghent, but Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma, was able to conquer the city in 1584.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 660–64.

<sup>138</sup> Dambruyne, 661–62; André Despretz, 'De Instauratie Der Gentse Calvinistische Republiek (1577-1579)', *Handelingen Der Maatschappij Voor Geschiedenis En Oudheidkunde Te Gent* 17 (1963): 170–83.

<sup>139</sup> Dambruyne, *Corporatieve middengroepen. Aspiraties, relaties en transformaties in de 16de-eeuwse Gentse ambachtswereld*, 662–664; Decavele, *Vlaanderen tussen Spanje en Oranje. Willem de Zwijger en de Lage Landen in de zestiende eeuw*, 100–102; See for a comparative overview: Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, "Les républiques calvinistes (1577-1585)", in *Rebelles et subversifs de nos régions: des Gaulois jusqu'à nos jours*, bewerkt door Anne Morelli (Brussels: Couleurs livres, 2011), 82–97.



Farnese was responsible for the recapture of many rebel cities. He had already come to the Netherlands in 1578 with a new army and would later take over the governorship of Don Juan. He used both military strategies and diplomacy to capture the rebellious towns in the Netherlands. In most of the conquered towns, he did not force the Calvinists to change their religion immediately in order to be pardoned. Instead, he offered a period of a couple of years in which heretics, under the condition that they did not cause any scandal, could stay. In Ghent this period was set at two years. However, if people refused to reconcile in this period, they had to leave.<sup>140</sup>

Before he conquered Ghent, Farnese had received the cooperation of most French-speaking provinces where the clergy had maintained their strong position. The nobles there did not agree with the extreme course of many grandees in the States General. On 6 January 1579, the provinces of Artois, Hainaut and Douai had already formed the Union of Atrecht, where they swore loyalty to the Pacification of Ghent, as well as to the king and the Catholic religion. Shortly thereafter they formed together with Lille and Orchies an alliance with Farnese.<sup>141</sup>

About two weeks after the Union of Atrecht, the rebellious parties (all the Northern provinces and many cities in the south, like Ghent) signed the Union of Utrecht. Calvinism was more prominent in this union, even though every province was allowed to have its own regulations. After some attempts to come to a political settlement, William of Orange resorted to military force and external support. In 1581, the States General promulgated the *Plakkaat van Verlatinghe*, depriving King Philip of his rights as king of the Netherlands. François van Alençon, Duke of Anjou and brother of the French King Henry III, became sovereign of the Union of rebel provinces, but already in 1583, Anjou's role in the Low Countries had ended. The following year William of Orange was murdered. Nevertheless, the Revolt continued.<sup>142</sup>

By 1584, apart from the French-speaking provinces and Ghent and the surrounding area, Groningen, Tournai, Ypres and Bruges were also back under princely rule. A short year after the fall of Ghent, the siege and conquest of Antwerp followed. After this, Farnese was called by King Philip II to lead military campaigns outside the Netherlands as well, a decision that stopped the completion of the successful recovery of the Low Countries. Furthermore, military aid from England in 1585 strengthened the States General, while Farnese could not always rely on the basic level of funds for his army. The Revolt continued and Farnese lost several cities in the Northern Netherlands, again to the

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<sup>140</sup> Violet Soen, 'De Reconciliatie van "Ketters" in de Zestiende-Eeuwse Nederlanden (1520-1590)', *Trajecta* 14 (n.d.): 355–56; Decavele, *Vlaanderen Tussen Spanje En Oranje. Willem de Zwijger En de Lage Landen in de Zestiende Eeuw*, 93.

<sup>141</sup> Decavele, *Vlaanderen Tussen Spanje En Oranje. Willem de Zwijger En de Lage Landen in de Zestiende Eeuw*, 93.

<sup>142</sup> Decavele, 93–99.

rebels. Most towns in the Southern Netherlands were, however, back under Habsburg rule and Catholic restoration could take place.<sup>143</sup>

### 1.4.3 Restoration

#### Political restoration

So once again, the Habsburg king had crushed Flemish and Brabantine revolts, even though other parts of the Netherlands would remain in their “rebellious” state. With the defeat of the Calvinist Republics, new punishments could be expected. Farnese differentiated his approach to the conquered and capitulated towns. He sacked the Brabantine city of Zichem in 1578 and Maastricht in 1579. However, Violet Soen has pointed to the cases of Oudenaarde and Zutphen, where Farnese decided it was important not to destroy the cities, even though he had the right to do so, but rather keep the peace and promote reconciliation. Philip II agreed to this more diplomatic approach. Reconciliation and respect for most local and provincial privileges were important aspects of Farnese’s policy and aided a quick restoration of the political and religious structure of the Southern Netherlands.<sup>144</sup>

In Ghent, Farnese ordered the reconstruction of the Spanish Castle to house the soldiers again and avoid having to burden the citizens too much. Farnese tried to find a balance between punishing the city and clemency, but was convinced that Ghent had to be dealt with more severely than Bruges. He planned the execution of six citizens in Ghent, while the city council had to openly humble themselves and show obedience to the king. However, the ongoing war meant that it would not come to this.<sup>145</sup> In general, Farnese focused on keeping the city and its privileges intact so that it could flourish again economically. His treaties did not immediately force the citizens to adopt Catholic orthodoxy. Nevertheless, the Catholic church was not neglected. Subsidies for the restoration of the churches were demanded as a fine from the towns he conquered. Also, Catholic orthodoxy was the goal when the new city councils were established.<sup>146</sup>

Andrew Spicer has shown that after the iconoclasm of 1566, Margaret of Parma and the Duke of Alva had also focused on the re-establishment of the Catholic Church and bringing the iconoclasts to justice. Margaret of Parma demanded the repair of the

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<sup>143</sup> Decavele, 100–103; Violet Soen, ‘Reconquista and Reconciliation in the Dutch Revolt: The Campaign of Governor-General Alexander Farnese (1578–1592)’, *Journal of Early Modern History* 16 (2012): 2–8.

<sup>144</sup> Soen, ‘Reconquista and Reconciliation in the Dutch Revolt: The Campaign of Governor-General Alexander Farnese (1578–1592)’, 9–12.

<sup>145</sup> Soen, 13.

<sup>146</sup> Soen, 13–22.

destroyed churches and called on the bishops to reconcile the churches. As the position of bishop was still vacant in Ghent, the bishop of Ypres, Martinus Rythovius, was asked to perform the rites of reconciliation in Ghent and thus enable the celebration of mass in the churches. Farnese's treaties with the capitulated towns would also include clauses demanding the restoration and reconciliation of the churches. Thus political restoration went hand in hand with Catholic restoration.<sup>147</sup>

During the period following Farnese's death in 1592, three governors ruled the Netherlands for short stretches of time until 1596, when Archduke Albert of Austria became governor-general. During his governorship especially, Catholic piety was stressed.<sup>148</sup> Albert had some important military successes (Calais, Hulst), but soon after there was a rapid succession of Spanish defeats. In reaction to his successes, a league against Spain was formed by France, England and the Dutch Republic. The biggest problem to the governorship would come from Spain, however. A lack of funds diminished the governor's military strength.<sup>149</sup> Even though war was indispensable, Albert was also a diplomat and peacemaker. The Peace of Vervins (1598) ended hostilities between Spain and France and restored the borders as they had been settled in the Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis. In the same period, arrangements had been made for the wedding of the daughter of Philip II, the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia, with her cousin Albert. In the Act of Cession (May 1598), Isabella received rights over the entire Burgundian heritage. With this marriage, Albert became joint sovereign of the Low Countries. The archducal couple would become known for their public displays of religiosity, such as pilgrimages, public prayers, solemn entries and festivities. Furthermore, many historians have claimed that the period of "Counter Reformation" commenced with their reign.<sup>150</sup> The case study of St James in Ghent will nuance this claim by revealing the initiatives and attitudes of ordinary Catholics before the arrival of the archdukes.

Of course, the active presence of the archdukes in the Netherlands, their financial support for the restoration and the Twelve Years' Truce (1609-1621) boosted both economic and ecclesiastical life. When the truce ended on 9 April 1621, the Southern Netherlands and the Dutch Republic returned to a state of war. Albert died a few months later after continued health problems. Isabella succeeded him as governor-general, but

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<sup>147</sup> Spicer, 'After Iconoclasm: Reconciliation and Resacralisation in the Southern Netherlands, c. 1566-1585', 411-18, 431.

<sup>148</sup> Luc Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety. Archduke Albert (1598-1621) and Habsburg Political Culture in an Age of Religious Wars* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), 42-43.

<sup>149</sup> Duerloo, 44-46.

<sup>150</sup> Duerloo, 47-55, 405; Michel Cloet, 'Antoon Triest, Prototype van Een Contrareformatische Bisschop, Op Bezoek in Zijn Gentse Diocees (1622-1657)', *Bijdragen En Mededelingen Betreffende de Geschiedenis Der Nederlanden* 91 (1976): 395.

was able to keep some of the old privileges, and ruled the Habsburg Netherlands until her death in 1633. The region was then handed back to the Spanish king, the young Philip IV.<sup>151</sup>

## Ecclesiastical restoration

During the Troubles, the ecclesiastical structure had also received a blow, but it would slowly recover and start working on the restoration of the Church. In November 1564, a decision was made regarding the diocese of Ghent that had been created in 1561. The king offered the theologian Cornelius Jansenius the position of bishop of Ghent. On 14 January 1565, Jansenius accepted the nomination and that same year the pope announced Jansenius's nomination as bishop of Ghent in a letter. However, the papal bulls for his appointment only arrived in Brussels in April 1566. Much of the delay had to do with arranging the finances necessary for maintaining a bishop. This problem had still not been solved by the summer of 1566, when Jansenius complained to the king and Granvelle that he could not start his work as bishop because he lacked the support of Margaret of Parma. The ongoing conflicts dominating the political and ecclesiastical landscape of the Netherlands were also partly responsible for the delay.<sup>152</sup>

The intervention of both King Philip and Alva were needed to arrange for Jansenius to come to Ghent. In 1567, Philip II informed Ghent by letter that Jansenius would soon take up his position as the first bishop of Ghent.<sup>153</sup> Another year passed and there was more correspondence before Jansenius finally arrived.<sup>154</sup> On 1 September 1568, Jansenius was consecrated bishop in the chapel of the Savoie college in Louvain. The ceremony was led by Francis Sonnius, who was then first bishop of 's-Hertogenbosch and later of Antwerp and assisted by the suffragan bishops of Mechelen and Cambrai.<sup>155</sup> A week later came his inauguration in Ghent. Thus three years after his appointment, Jansenius could finally assume his position as bishop of Ghent.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety. Archduke Albert (1598-1621) and Habsburg Political Culture in an Age of Religious Wars*, 202–8, 507–10, 518–20.

<sup>152</sup> Jan Lockefeer and Jan de Kort, eds., *Cornelius Jansenius van Hulst 1510-1576* (Hulst: Oudheidkundige Kring 'De vier Ambachten', 2010), 169–79. SAG, Series 94 bis, nr. 21, fo. 9 (letter of 6/07/1565); SAG, Series 94 bis, nr. 21, fo. 9 (letter of 6/07/1565).

<sup>153</sup> SAG, Series 94 bis, no 21, fo 7 vo (letter of 8/04/1567).

<sup>154</sup> SAG, Series 94 bis, no 21, fo 1, 8, 10 vo.

<sup>155</sup> Cloet, *Het Bisdom Gent (1559-1991). Vier Eeuwen Geschiedenis*, 37; Marnef, 'Een Nieuw Bisdom in Troebele Tijden. Vanaf de Oprichting Tot Het Episcopaat van Willem van Bergen', 40. Also the first bishop of Antwerp knew a strong delay. The famous Francis Sonnius entered Antwerp as first bishop only on 1 May 1570.

<sup>156</sup> SAG, Series 94 bis, no 21, fo 6.

Jansenius would remain bishop of Ghent until his death in 1576. As a result of the Ghent Calvinist Republic (1577-1584), the episcopal see remained vacant for almost a decade. But even after Ghent returned to Habsburg rule, it still took some time before a stable episcopal regime took over.<sup>157</sup> In 1584 a new bishop, Joannes Vonckius, was nominated, but he would never arrive in Ghent as he died in 1585. The next bishop, Mattheus Rucquebusch, died in 1586 before the papal nomination bull had arrived and the third bishop to be nominated after the Calvinist Republic, Willem Lindanus, had only been bishop for a year when he died in 1588. Thus for most of the period from 1577 to at least 1589, there had been no real bishop to lead the diocese of Ghent. Instead, a vicar general was in charge, though his leadership has not yet been thoroughly studied.<sup>158</sup> Finally, in 1590 a new bishop named Peter Damant was appointed, who would remain in his position for a considerable period, namely 19 years.<sup>159</sup>

During the Twelve Years' Truce, three bishops ruled for relatively short periods over the diocese of Ghent: Karel Maes, Hendrik Frans van der Burch and Jacob Boonen.<sup>160</sup> One of the most famous Ghent bishops during the Early Modern Period was Anton Triest, who would lead the bishopric from 1621 until 1657. The Catholic church historian Michel Cloet even gave him the title of “prototype of a Counter-Reformation bishop”. Triest came from a wealthy and noble family that had strong ties with Ghent. He had already been chaplain at the court in Brussels when the archdukes nominated him as dean of the St Donaas chapter in Bruges in 1610, bishop of Bruges in 1616 and four years later, bishop of Ghent. Both in Bruges and in Ghent, Triest made his name as an active bishop who introduced new measures to facilitate the inspection of the parishes and the fight against heresy. Throughout his episcopacy of 36 years, he visited the 150 parishes of the bishopric and wrote a report every two to three years. These episcopal reports and the annual deanery reports are all well preserved.<sup>161</sup> Triest's episcopacy was in line with the statutes of the provincial council of 1607 and diocesan council of 1613. He pressed strongly for the keeping of registers of baptisms, marriages and deaths, as the Council of Trent and the *Rituale Romanum* of 1614 had demanded. Also with regard to the convents, he tried to bring them in line with the Tridentine decrees.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Cloet, *Het Bisdom Gent (1559-1991)*. *Vier Eeuwen Geschiedenis*, 49.

<sup>158</sup> Gardin E., *De contrareformatie te Gent, 1584-1633*. Deel 1, licentiaatsverhandeling Universiteit Gent, prof. M. Baelde, 1988, p. 7-13.

<sup>159</sup> Cloet, *Het Bisdom Gent (1559-1991)*. *Vier Eeuwen Geschiedenis*, 52.

<sup>160</sup> Marie Juliette Marinus, 'K. Maes, H.F. Van Der Burch En J. Boonen: Drie Bisschoppen Tijdens Het Twaalfjarig Bestand (1610-1621)', in *Het Bisdom Gent. Vier Eeuwen Geschiedenis*, ed. Michel Cloet (Ghent, 1992), 58-65.

<sup>161</sup> Michel Cloet, 'Antoon Triest (1621-1657)', in *Het Bisdom Gent. Vier Eeuwen Geschiedenis* (Ghent, 1992), 67-68; Cloet, 'Antoon Triest, Prototype van Een Contrareformatorische Bisschop, Op Bezoek in Zijn Gentse Diocees (1622-1657)', 394.

<sup>162</sup> Cloet, 'Antoon Triest (1621-1657)', 71-77.



## Chapter 2

# The power of the social framework: dissidence, morals and community after iconoclasm

### 2.1 Iconoclasm in Ghent

There is no doubt that iconoclasm came as a shock to many people in Ghent. In the wake of the great iconoclastic wave that swept the country in the summer of 1566 and reached Ghent on 22 and 23 August, Marcus van Vaernewijck wrote that some people were “zoo verwondert, verscricht ende onstelt waren duer de nieuwe groote wonderlicke veranderinghe, die scheen in veel pointen voor handen te wesen, dat zij spraken: de lucht en verandert niet, als oft haer jeghen reden ghedocht hadde, dat Godt daeromme gheen meerckelicke teeken in de lucht en vertoochde, recht als of hij gheslapen hadde... Ander werden daerof zieck, ander laghen snachts in haer bedden ende zuchten ende en weenden, ende laghen met ghevauden handen, mans ende wijfs”.<sup>163</sup>

For most people it must have been a very confusing time. Van Vaernewijck described in detail the silence, fear and grief that dominated the streets of Ghent. When people came across their friends, many did not greet each other or talk. The clergy were especially

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<sup>163</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 118 (Part I); Judith Pollmann, ‘Countering the Reformation in France and the Netherlands: Clerical Leadership and Catholic Violence 1560-1585’, *Past & Present* 190 (February 2006): 94. Pollmann’s translation of this quote is “so astonished, terrified and shocked by the new, great and wondrous changes that seemed about to happen that they said ‘[yet] the heavens are unchanged’, as if they found it unintelligible that God failed to display notable signs in the skies, just as if He had been asleep. [ ] Others became sick; others, men and women, lay in their beds at night sighing and weeping, wringing their hands [ ].”

scared.<sup>164</sup> The confusion was not only the result of iconoclasm itself, but also of the changing political situation. People did not know what would happen next and were uncertain about what was allowed and what was not. It would take a while before ecclesiastical life was back on track.<sup>165</sup>

Iconoclasm reached Ghent on 22 and 23 August.<sup>166</sup> Van Vaernewijck described how a group of about 400 people, mostly people from outside Ghent, surrounded the *tempelhuis*<sup>167</sup> (not far from the Gravensteen, the Count's Castle) and demanded that the parish clerk open the gates of the graveyard. Very soon others, who must have been people living in Ghent, joined in the destruction. In total there were 500 or 600 people, many of whom, according to Van Vaernewijck, were apprentices and journeymen who had experienced difficulties in finding a job because of the troubled economy. He added that these men were mainly foreigners who had come to Ghent to find work. He also affirmed what later witnesses would claim, namely that the authorities of Ghent did not take a clear stance on the destruction taking place. On the contrary, an important servant of the bailiff, captain Artus Bousse, informed the gathering that the bailiff accepted the destruction but that no property should be removed. After he spoke, the crucifix in front of the *tempelhuis* was pulled down and smashed into pieces. This was the signal to start the destruction in other places as well.<sup>168</sup> In the end, the seven parish churches, a collegial church, 25 convents, ten hospitals and seven chapels were destroyed. After these events, on Friday 23 August, the high bailiff demanded the iconoclasts to leave the city.<sup>169</sup>

Although Van Vaernewijck initially blamed foreigners, his account and later official reports make clear that Ghent citizens were also involved. The focus on St James gives me the opportunity to reconstruct which members of the parish took part in iconoclasm or in practices linked to Protestantism and *gheuserie*<sup>170</sup>, and gain insight into their motives. Furthermore, the reactions to and legal consequences of their dissidence enable us to see how the (parish) community regarded the iconoclasts and Protestants in the first two

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<sup>164</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 112 (II); This fear of the clergy was witnessed in other towns and at the start of the Calvinist Republics as well: Harline and Put, *A Bishop's Tale. Mathias Hovius among His Flock in Seventeenth-Century Flanders*, 7–8.

<sup>165</sup> Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 121–22.

<sup>166</sup> Detailed information on iconoclasm in Ghent and the Wonder Year can be found in: Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567'.

<sup>167</sup> The building and chapel of the templars that left Ghent already in 1312, see: Leen Charles, 'Van Ridders, Rovers En Rabauwen. Het Gentse Tempelhof, 1200-1794', *Handelingen Der Maatschappij Voor Geschiedenis En Oudheidkunde Te Gent* LXIII (June 2009): 169–99.

<sup>168</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 105–106 (I).

<sup>169</sup> Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 50.

<sup>170</sup> This accusation of *gheuserie* is used by Van Vaernewijck in a broader sense than in the usual meaning of the political crime of rebellion against King Philip II. As a lot of my research is based on the account of Van Vaernewijck, I have followed his interpretation of *gheuserie* and use it as a generic term for various forms of dissidence linked to Protestantism, iconoclasm and political revolt in the 1560s.



years following iconoclasm. This is an important step in understanding the impact of iconoclasm and the Wonder Year on the Ghent community. This chapter's focus on the dissidents within their community also aids our understanding of what is meant to belong to a community in early modern Ghent. It sheds light on the values that were considered fundamental for social cohesion and that could, but often did not, coincide with Roman Catholic principles.

## 2.2 Iconoclasts and religious dissidents in St James

When the Duke of Alva came to Ghent in 1567, rumour had it that 230 people in Ghent had been convicted for being involved in *gheuserie*. Van Vaernewijck reported that about 80 of them were believed to have come from the parish of St James. This high number indicates that St James had “delivered” approximately 35% of all those convicted, even though St James was one of the smaller central parishes. The reality does not seem to have been so far off. In February 1568, placards listing a total of 100 names were hung on the doors of the three central churches: St James, St Michael and St Bavon, and the *schepenhuis van de Keure*. All the men listed on these placards were ordered by the Council of Flanders to present themselves before Alva on pain of perpetual banishment and the confiscation of all their goods and property. Van Vaernewijck described some of the charges that could lead to a conviction by the Council of Troubles: membership of the Calvinist church council (consistory), being present at gatherings against the prince and donations of money or arms for this purpose, acting as armed guards or collecting alms during hedge preaching (*hagepreken*), bringing in and providing lodging for false (*valsche*) preachers, rebaptisms<sup>171</sup>, support for Calvin's and other heretical teachings, signing the so called act of submission and denouncing (*afzweren*) the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>172</sup> The Council of Flanders was thus targeting the main instigators of the troubles and the leading members of the Calvinist movement. The list on the doors of St James was the longest (40 men), but not all those named were parishioners of St James.<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Karen E. Spierling, *Infant Baptism in Reformation Geneva. The Shaping of a Community, 1536-1564*, St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History (Aldershot, Burlington: Ashgate, 2005), 7–9. The term “*herdoopt*” was used, but it is not clear how common this practice was in Ghent and if Calvinists also carried out this practice as Calvin and his followers, unlike Anabaptists, practiced child baptism.

<sup>172</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 13-16 (IV).

<sup>173</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 272–79, 299 (III).

In order to find all the parishioners of St James who had taken part in iconoclasm or were punished for religious dissidence during the Wonder Year, I used Van Vaernewijck's transcription of the lists hung on the church doors, other descriptions in his chronicle of the punishment given to Ghent citizens after iconoclasm and Jozef Scheerder's study of the inventory of confiscated goods of 1567, and other sources linked to the Council of Troubles.<sup>174</sup> Scheerder found 195 names in the confiscation accounts of Ghent. Most of these men and women had been summoned to court for *gheuserie* and had fled the city. Most likely, dissidents who had already been executed or who had been punished in other ways do not appear on this list. Of the 195 convicted townsmen who left Ghent and whose goods were confiscated, Scheerder found enough information in the sources to discuss 76 in detail.<sup>175</sup>

In his socio-economic study of Calvinism in Ghent, Marcel Delmotte found that the majority of the group accused of *gheuserie* in Ghent came from the old city centre of Ghent and St James was home to about one-third of them. In particular, Lange Munt, the Vrijdagmarkt, Onderstraat and Steendam had been hotbeds of religious-political rebellion. Most of the other "defiant" streets of Ghent were directly connected to or actual extensions of the streets of St James: Leertouwersgracht, Oudburg, Burgstraat in St Michael's parish, Hoogpoort and Nieuwen Aert (now Oude Beestenmarkt) in St John's parish and the Vismarkt (now Groentemarkt) and Veerleplein in St Nicholas's parish. This region coincides with the old city centre of Ghent.<sup>176</sup>

Combining the studies of Scheerder and the chronicle of Van Vaernewijck, I found at least 30 people who had been involved in some form of *gheuserie* and could be identified as parishioners of St James, and had been sentenced by the Council of Troubles, or the Council of Flanders or the magistracy of Ghent, or at least summoned to Brussels. Their names can be found (in alphabetical order) in Table 1.

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<sup>174</sup> Jozef Scheerder, 'Documenten in verband met confiscatie van roerende goederen van hervormingsgezinden te Gent (1567-1568)', *Bulletin de la Commission Royale d'Histoire*, 157 (1991): 221.

<sup>175</sup> Scheerder, 133-34.

<sup>176</sup> M. Delmotte, 'Het Calvinisme in de verschillende bevolkingslagen te Gent (1566-1567)', *Tijdschrift voor geschiedenis* 1963, no. 76 (n.d.): 166.

Table 1 List of known dissidents living in the St James parish in 1566

First name		Last name	Street	Profession	Punishment	Dissidence	Literature <sup>177</sup>
Joris	van der	Beke	Steendam	hawker	condemned	Promoted Calvinism, deacon, iconoclasm	S-W, 241, V, 413
Pieter	de	Bellemakere	Achter de Vrijdagmarkt	rentier, alderman in 1547, 1550	banished	Attended secret gatherings of Calvinists, member of consistory and committee for construction of temple	MVV, II, 8, 159, III, 272-278; S-D, 208
Gheeraert	van	Bijlande	Steenpoort	basket maker, rhetorician	imprisoned and ?	Iconoclasm	MVV, III, 282-285
Guillame	van den	Bogaerde	Onderstraat	weaver, merchant, rhetorician	banished	Support of Calvinism	MVV, III, 272-278; S-D, 220
Gooris	van den	Boomgaerde	Lange Munt	merchant, alderman	banished	Member of consistory, support of Calvinist preachers, attended hedge preaching	MVV, I, 46, II, 6-9, III, 272-278; S-D, 129, S-W 240
Frederick	de	Buck	Vrijdagmarkt	goldsmith	beheaded	Support of Calvinist church, attended hedge preaching	MVV, IV, 14-16; S-D, 207
Gyselbrecht		Cools	Saaisteeg (now Schepenhuisstraat)	plumber	hanged	Iconoclasm	S-W, 220
Gillis		Coorne	tPlaatsken achter de Vrijdagmarkt	painter	hanged	Guarded hedge preaching, leading figure in iconoclasm, Calvinist	MVV, III, 305-308; S-W, 221
Jacob		Crispijn	tPlaatsken achter de Vrijdagmarkt	shoemaker /doctor	hanged		MVV, III, 308-310, S-W, 222
Lievin		Dherde	Melkbrug, Steendam	rentier	convocation		MVV, III, 272-278
Jan		Diericx	Steendam	attorney	unknown	Member of consistory and committee for construction of temple	S-W, 228
Jan	van	Evenackere	Hammekin	?	burned	Attended hedge preaching	MVV, III, 272-278; S-D, 211
Lievin		Henricx	Lange Munt	merchant, alderman in 1558	banished	Member of consistory and committee for construction of temple	MVV, III, 272-278; S-D, 129, 207
Jan		Martins	Onderstraat	second-hand clothes dealer	finned and imprisoned	Iconoclasm	MVV, III, 22-23
Joos		Meijeraert	Achter de Vrijdagmarkt	innkeeper	imprisoned	gheuserie	MVV, III, 22-23
Marc	de	Mil	Achter de Vrijdagmarkt	merchant	banished	Member of consistory and committee for construction of temple	MVV, III, 272-278; S-W, 224; S-D, 129, 209
Charles		Oetgheer	Saaisteeg (now Schepenhuisstraat)	carpenter	banished	Member of consistory and committee for construction of temple	MVV, III, 272-278; S-D, 129, 220
Jan		Pijls	Onderstraat	attorney at the magistrates' court	banished	Member of consistory and committee for construction of temple	S-D, 129, 221
Jan	de	Pruet	Onderstraat	blacksmith	finned, stayed in Ghent for six years	Iconoclasm	MVV, II, 207; S-W, 225
Jacob	de	Pruet	Onderstraat	blacksmith	banished	Iconoclasm	MVV I 209, III, 272-278; S-W, 225
Jan	van der	Riviere	Sint-Jacobsnieuwstraat	painter and grocer	beheaded	Iconoclasm, Calvinist baptism	MVV, III, 296-298; S-D, 211
Jan		Rooze	Onderstraat	roof worker	hanged	Calvinist	MVV, III, 303-305; S-W, 235
Nicasius	van der	Schuere (son of Willems)			convocation	Calvinist preacher	MVV, III, 272-278; S-D, 129
Jan		Tayaert	Onderstraat	schoolteacher	banned from teaching	Attended hedge preaching, Calvinist baptism	S-W, 237
Christoffel		Uutwaes	Wandelstraat (Serpentstraat)		banished	Attended hedge preaching	S-D, 221

<sup>177</sup> MVV stands for Van Vaernewijck's chronicle: Van Vaernewijck, *Van die beroerlicke tijden in die Nederlanden, en voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*; S-D stands for Scheerder, 'Documenten in verband met confiscatie van roerende goederen van hervormingsgezinden te Gent (1567-1568)'; S-W stands for Scheerder, 'Het wonderjaar te Gent, 1566-1567'; V stands for Verheyden, *Het Gentse Martyrologium (1530-1595)*.

<b>Liefkin</b>	van der	Vennen		rhetorician	imprisoned	Calvinism	MVV, III, 281-282
<b>Jacques</b>	de	Vlieghere	Sint-Jacobsnieuwstraat bij de Oude Veemarkt	carrier	short imprisonment		S-D, 211
<b>Lievin</b>	de	Vlieghere	Sint-Jacobsnieuwstraat	carrier, furrier	short imprisonment	Destruction of a painting	MVV, III, 24
<b>Matheus</b>	de	Vlieghere	Sint-Jacobsnieuwstraat	carrier, furrier	beheaded	Guard at hedge preaching, Calvinist funeral	MVV, III, 258-259; S-D, 211
<b>Pieter</b>		Zoetins	tPlaatsken achter de Vrijdagmarkt		beheaded	Guard at hedge preaching, Calvinist baptism	S-D, 208

About eight of this group clearly belonged to the more prominent ranks of society, either because they were described by Van Vaernewijck as being rich or because we know they had held important political positions in the preceding years. One wealthy parishioner was Pieter de Bellemakere, who lived off his rents and had been an alderman in 1547 and 1550. He had attended the secret gatherings of the Calvinists in Wondelgem on 16 August 1566, was a member of the consistory and part of the committee that later organized the construction of the Calvinist temple in Ghent. The attorney Jan Pijls, the merchant Marc de Mil and the carpenter Charles Oetghier were also convicted. They were accused of being members of the consistory, participating in the committee responsible for the construction of the temple and of taking part in the negotiations of the Calvinists with the magistracy and Egmont. The wealthy merchant Lievin Hendricx, who had also been an alderman in 1558, was also accused of being a member of the Calvinist consistory and taking part in the negotiations with the magistracy and Egmont. Furthermore, the merchant Gooris van den Boomgaerde, who in recent years had been an alderman active on the Gedele bench of magistrates, was found guilty. He had aided the Protestant preachers and attended their sermons. According to Van Vaernewijck, he told the other aldermen that he was “only risking his neck”. The lawyer Jan Diericx, described by Van Vaernewijck as a very learned and eloquent man, had been a member of the consistory and the committee in charge of the construction of the temple and had taken part in the negotiations of the Reformed with the magistracy. Finally, another wealthy man who was convicted, although we do not know the exact accusation, was Lievin Dherde.<sup>178</sup>

Some of the dissidents belonged to the middle and lower classes of the parish, while the social classes of other dissidents is unclear. The majority (11 people) were accused because of their links with the Calvinist church. Examples include the young preacher Nicasius van der Schuere and the rhetorician Liefkin van der Vennen, who was said to write and cite poems mocking the clergy. Jan van Evenackere and Christoffel Uutwaes had attended Protestant sermons. The furrier Matheus de Vlieghere was more extreme,

<sup>178</sup> Gooris van den Boomgaerde said that “Hij en conde maer den hals verbueren”, see Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 272-79, 281-82, 303-305 (III), 14-16 (IV); Scheerder, ‘Documenten in verband met confiscatie van roerende goederen van hervormingsgezinden te Gent (1567-1568)’, 129, 130, 207, 208, 211, 220, 221,; Verheyden, *Het Gentse Martyrologium (1530-1595)*, 1945:40-41; Scheerder, ‘Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567’, 228, 240.

as he went armed to the preaching, and he had attended a funeral in the Calvinist temple. Pieter Zoetins was also armed when he attended the Calvinist sermons and he had his child baptized in the Calvinist temple. Joris van der Beke was a hawker who had promoted the new religion and had been a deacon in the Calvinist church. He was also accused of inciting the son of his wife to join the image-breaking in St James's church. The goldsmith Frederick De Buck had attended Calvinist sermons in England and Ghent and had supported the Calvinists financially. The schoolteacher Jan Tayaert had attended a secret gathering in Wondelgem, attended Calvinist preaching and baptized his children according to Calvinist rites. Joos Meijeraert had been an innkeeper in Antwerp before he came to Ghent and was accused of distributing heretical books among the people of Ghent.<sup>179</sup> The carrier and furrier Lievin de Vlieghe, father of Jacques and Matheus, was imprisoned together with his wife and daughter because a soldier found a mutilated religious painting in their house.<sup>180</sup> As for the weaver, merchant and rhetorician Guillame van den Bogaerde, all we know is that he was accused of being involved in Calvinism.<sup>181</sup> For some parishioners it was impossible to track down the precise accusation: these were Jacques de Vlieghe, son of Lievin de Vlieghe<sup>182</sup>, “master” Jacob Crispijn, a shoemaker who later claimed to be a doctor and was nicknamed Shoelap<sup>183</sup>, the roofworker (*ticheldecker*) Jan Rooze and master Gillis Coorne, a painter (*incarnate ververe*)<sup>184</sup>.

Six parishioners on the list had taken an active part in iconoclasm: the blacksmith Jacob de Pruet and his son Lau or Jan de Pruet, the painter and grocer Jan van der Riviere, the second-hand clothes dealer Jan Martins and the basket maker Gheeraert Van Bijlande.<sup>185</sup> The plumber Gyselbrecht Cools was also accused of iconoclasm, but he already

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<sup>179</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 22–23, 61–62 (III).

<sup>180</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 24–25 (III); Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 25. Lievin De Vlieghe also said to buy and sell second hand goods. In this period the term used was *oudkleerkoper*. It is important to note that the name “second-hand clothes dealer” can be somewhat misleading as they bought and sold more than clothes alone. In this sense, it was not odd that Lievin De Vlieghe had an old painting in his house whose origin he did not know.

<sup>181</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 273 (III).

<sup>182</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 272–79, 281–82, 303–305 (III), 14–16 (IV); Scheerder, ‘Documenten in verband met confiscatie van roerende goederen van hervormingsgezinden te Gent (1567-1568)’, 129, 130, 207, 208, 211, 220, 221; Verheyden, *Het Gentse Martyrologium (1530-1595)*, 1945:40–41.

<sup>183</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 308 (III); Scheerder, ‘Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567’, 222.

<sup>184</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 305 (III).

<sup>185</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 22, 23, 272–79, 281–82, 303–305 (III), 14–16 (IV); Scheerder, ‘Documenten in verband met confiscatie van roerende goederen van hervormingsgezinden te Gent (1567-1568)’, 129, 130, 207, 208, 211, 220, 221; Verheyden, *Het Gentse Martyrologium (1530-1595)*, 1945:40–41; Scheerder, ‘Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567’, 237, 241.

had a criminal record. In 1563 he had helped a nun leave her convent and then raped her, and he was known to have been involved in a theft. During the iconoclasm he recruited other men to attack churches. According to Scheerder, although he died as a Catholic he was not buried in holy ground.<sup>186</sup>

### **Social position of dissidents**

The more prominent parishioners of St James who were convicted had not been involved in iconoclasm, but had held public positions in the Calvinist church organization or had openly supported the Calvinists. Delmotte, who studied the social profile of all those convicted of *gheuserie* in Ghent, observed that the majority of those accused of having links with Calvinism belonged to the middle and upper classes of society.<sup>187</sup> Guido Marnef, who studied the Calvinists in Antwerp, had similar findings. During the Wonder Year in Antwerp, most leading members of Calvinism lived in the city's economic and financial centre. They had come to the fore during the Wonder Year and many of them fled abroad when persecution began again.<sup>188</sup> The predominance of middle class men does not mean that it was only the elite who had Calvinist sympathies. The elite held more visible positions in the organization of the Calvinist community and church, for example as deacons or members of the consistory. This made it easier to identify and accuse them of *gheuserie*.<sup>189</sup> This was also reflected in the persecution by the Council of Troubles, which wanted to mainly target the leaders and has thus resulted in a bias in the sources. The Calvinist church grew strongly during the Wonder Year and therefore during the repression of 1567 the focus was narrowed to only the instigators of the riots, the leaders of the rebellion and the organizers and members of the consistories.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 67, 220.

<sup>187</sup> Delmotte, 'Het Calvinisme in de verschillende bevolkingslagen te Gent (1566-1567)', 171-72.

<sup>188</sup> Marnef, *Antwerp in the Age of Reformation. Underground Protestantism in a Commercial Metropolis 1550-1577*, 177, 184-85.

<sup>189</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 158-159 (II); Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 161-62; Lockefer and de Kort, *Cornelius Jansenius van Hulst 1510-1576*, 127-28. The elite was also considered to have an exemplary role in society. As a result, their public misdemeanours were considered worse. During the general pardon of 1570, bishop Jansenius especially urged high officials and clerics who had attended hedge preaching to do public penance as they had misled the common man. In order to be pardoned they also had to pay a fine, which was higher and depended on their status. Van Vaernewijck's list of deacons was different from that compiled by other institutions, such as the Council of Troubles. Therefore it is hard to know exactly who had what position: "De bovenghenoumde dijaken ofte aelmoesseniers vande ghuen waren ooc herde fijne mannen, als Lieven Brakel- man, Martin Volckaert, Martin Dierkins, Claeijs De Zaleere, apotecaris an de Vischmaerct, ende Pieter De Bellemakere, Lievin Van den Wijnckele, brauwer in den Tenenpot, Adam Aijman, ende dierghelijcke. Maer hadden haer fijnicheijt qualic ghebesicht int faict vander religie ende verstooringhe vanden ghemeen vrede, verweckende tot rechtveerdighen toorne die edel Coninclike Majesteit".

<sup>190</sup> Marnef, *Antwerp in the Age of Reformation. Underground Protestantism in a Commercial Metropolis 1550-1577*, 92-93.

Members and sympathisers of Calvinism could be found throughout the population. Contemporaries regarded merchants and certain guilds, such as those of the goldsmiths, silversmiths and tinsmiths, as groups that were especially “infected”. But as for the others involved in the expansion of Calvinism, many came from the building trade and the smaller guilds or were carpenters, shopkeepers and impoverished textile workers.<sup>191</sup> Scheerder’s research gives further details on the professional background of the convicts. Of a total of 195 convicted townsmen who left Ghent and had their goods confiscated, 76 could be identified in more detail and for 63 of these people we know the profession.<sup>192</sup> Again, they were mainly members of the elite and middle classes, but they still formed quite a diverse group. The 63 people whose identities and professions could be traced had 41 different occupations between them. Six of them had been aldermen before 1566.<sup>193</sup> The majority, however, can be placed in three occupational categories: trade, crafts and the liberal professions (including schoolteachers). Marnef has made some comparisons between Ghent, Antwerp and Bruges. The proportion of Ghent Calvinists with a liberal profession equalled that of Antwerp (about one-quarter), but exceeded that of Bruges (8.2%). Another quarter of the Ghent Calvinists worked in crafts. Antwerp had a much lower proportion (11.6%), while the proportion of Calvinist craftsmen was much higher in Bruges, namely 40%. Merchants played an important role in the organization of the Calvinist church everywhere. During the Wonder Year, the majority of Antwerp Calvinists worked in the trade sector (54.3%), while only about one-third of the Calvinists in Ghent and Bruges could be identified as tradesmen.<sup>194</sup> As most craftsmen lived and worked in the old city centre of Ghent, and many among this social group had flirted with Calvinism<sup>195</sup>, it is no surprise that so many dissidents came from St James’s parish. Johan Dambruyne noted that before Charles V’s punishment of Ghent in 1540, the parishes of St Nicolas and St James had the most houses where craftsmen gathered (29 altogether). St James’s parish had been home to 14 of these houses, with the Vrijdagmarkt (3) and Onderstraat (6) in particular acting as central meeting places for craftsmen.<sup>196</sup> There were 14 other houses for craftsmen spread across the other city parishes. Tradesmen also found St James an attractive location to live because its centre was home to Vrijdagmarkt, where a weekly market was held every Friday.

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<sup>191</sup> Delmotte, ‘Het Calvinisme in de verschillende bevolkingslagen te Gent (1566-1567)’, 172–73.

<sup>192</sup> Scheerder, ‘Documenten in verband met confiscatie van roerende goederen van hervormingsgezinden te Gent (1567-1568)’, 133–34.

<sup>193</sup> Scheerder, 134.

<sup>194</sup> Marnef, *Antwerp in the Age of Reformation. Underground Protestantism in a Commercial Metropolis 1550-1577*, 92–93.

<sup>195</sup> Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 637–38.

<sup>196</sup> Dambruyne, 94–95, 756–57.

The iconoclasts had very diverse profiles. As we have seen for St James, only a small proportion of the people convicted had been directly involved in iconoclasm. The Council of Troubles would convict a total of 64 people of Ghent for iconoclasm. Their economic status has been analysed by Delmotte and Dambruyne. Delmotte stated that about two-thirds of this group belonged to the poorest section of the population. Furthermore, most of them were not burghers and many lived mainly outside the city centre. This might explain the rather small number of iconoclasts in the central parish of St James. Most of those convicted for image-breaking also had a weaker social framework, as they were not usually members of a guild and had only temporary work. Dambruyne is more moderate in his conclusions. He found that about 53% of the group convicted of iconoclasm by the Council of Troubles did not own possessions and calculated that at least 45%, but probably more, were craft masters. Of those iconoclasts who were executed and whose profession is known, 65% (19 out of 29) were guild masters. So they were not only the poorest people, though the proportion of poor people in this group was larger than in the group of convicted Calvinists.<sup>197</sup>

## 2.3 Motives for iconoclasm

At first glance, these findings seem to confirm the theory that iconoclasm was a socio-economic upheaval rather than a religious or political one. In particular, Erich Kuttner supported the idea that iconoclasm was a form of social strife, even though he believed it had already been planned by the Calvinist consistories in July 1566. He observed that the growing poverty and rising grain prices had already led to uprisings earlier in the summer of 1566. The wealthy tradesmen and nobles in particular, as well as the governess, expressed fears of a large-scale social revolt in the summer of 1566. According to Kuttner, iconoclasm was a diversion that led angry impoverished men away from the houses of the social elite, both Catholic and Protestant, to the unguarded churches and cloisters.<sup>198</sup> So even though Kuttner mentioned the religious motive, his main interpretation of the *Beeldenstorm* (iconoclasm) pointed to social anger as the driving force behind the actions

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<sup>197</sup> Delmotte, 'Het Calvinisme in de verschillende bevolkingslagen te Gent (1566-1567)', 159–61; Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 50–52; Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 641–42. Scheerder stressed that not all iconoclasts were poor.

<sup>198</sup> Erich Kuttner, *Het Hongerjaar 1566*, ed. Johan Winkler (Amsterdam: Amsterdamsche Boek- en Courantmaatschappij, 1949), 305–17.



of the poor, who were the main participants in the destruction, while it was mainly the elite who profited from the social-political consequences. This theory has been proven wrong by subsequent historiography on the subject.<sup>199</sup> Arguments against the focus on the socio-economic situation to explain iconoclasm can also be found by examining the events in more detail. Arjan van Dixhoorn has confirmed that in 1565-1566, the grain issue aroused passions in most places in the Low Countries. However, there had also been grain shortages before 1565 and public discussions on how to deal with them. In particular, there were debates about what role the government should play and who was to blame, with many different levels of the population voicing their opinions. The arguments used and focus of anger was different from that in the political-religious issues. Furthermore, the people involved in cases of violence linked with the dearth seem to have been different from those involved in iconoclasm. Kuttner and van Dixhoorn mentioned the prominent role of women in discussions with and riots against merchant bankers, while most iconoclasts seem to have been men. In his study of various accounts from the Low Countries, Peter Arnade found that only a small minority of women were mentioned in connection with iconoclasm. While the women usually resorted to pilfering goods that met their domestic needs, the men showed more destructive behaviour.<sup>200</sup>

There is also an essential difference between the character of the riots against the merchant bankers and the iconoclastic fury. Whereas the main goals of the women and men attacking the merchants was the preservation of their families, stable grain prices and the Common Good<sup>201</sup>, the actions of the iconoclasts were in many ways focused on ending or reversing traditional practices and revealed a belief that times were changing. This does not mean that there was no overlap or that people could not be angry with the merchant bankers and the government at the same time as being angry with the churches

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<sup>199</sup> Henk van Nierop, 'Alva's Throne - Making Sense of the Revolt of the Netherlands', in *The Origins and Development of the Dutch Revolt*, ed. Graham Darby (London, New York: Routledge, 2001), 31-37.

<sup>200</sup> Arjan van Dixhoorn, 'The Grain Issue of 1565-1566. Policy Making, Public Opinion, and the Common Good in the Habsburg Netherlands', in *De Bono Communi. The Discourse and Practice of the Common Good in the European City (13th - 16th c.)*, ed. Elodie Lecuppre-Desjardin and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, *Studies in European Urban History (1100-1800)* 22 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 174-77, 191, 194; Kuttner, *Het Hongerjaar 1566*, 306-7; Arnade, 'The Rage of the "Canaille": The Logic of Fury in the Iconoclasm Riots of 1566', 99, 100, 105; M.S.J. Dierickx, 'Beeldenstorm in de Nederlanden in 1566', *Streven* 19 (1966): 1041; Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 18-19, 43-45; Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 639. Men also robbed and pillaged, but according to Arnade they seemed more focused on their physical needs: eating and drinking was an important aspect of iconoclasm. The fact that men and women were thinking of their needs during the destructions does not negate having more general political and religious motives for the riots. A recurring idea that can be linked with the protest on a theological level was, for example, that wealthy clergy and idols or images did not need food and drink.

<sup>201</sup> van Dixhoorn, 'The Grain Issue of 1565-1566. Policy Making, Public Opinion, and the Common Good in the Habsburg Netherlands'.

or the images within them. However, these riots were sparked by distinct issues and the people involved had different arguments. Anger provoked in one area of discussion did not have to lead to destructive behaviour in a totally different set of issues.

Lee Palmer Wandel has been able to establish a link between the socio-economic factors and the religious ones in her study of iconoclasm in Zurich, Strasbourg and Basel. She viewed iconoclastic actions, even when committed by the poorer and more marginal members of society, as tangible acts of piety.<sup>202</sup> Van Vaernewijck also mentioned that many people in Ghent, sometimes including the iconoclasts themselves as well as the Spanish soldiers, linked the attacks on the churches with the Reformed religion and *gheuserie*.<sup>203</sup> In addition, Scheerder's meticulous study of the Wonder Year in Ghent illustrated the organized character and importance of religious ideas in the outbreak of iconoclasm, so countering Kuttner's argument that social strife was at the root of iconoclasm.<sup>204</sup> The first riot on 10 August 1566 in Steenvoorde and iconoclasm in Antwerp and other places also revealed a strong link between the Reformed faith and the iconoclastic riots.<sup>205</sup>

Indeed, many historians today consider the iconoclasm in the Low Countries to have been a political tool to show antipathy towards the central government and the Catholic Church. Mixed in with religious motives, iconoclasm was used in the fight against idolatry and to promote the spread of Protestantism.<sup>206</sup> While the intensity and spread of the wave of destruction covering the Low Countries was exceptional, iconoclasm was not a new phenomenon. Especially from the 1520's onwards, northern Europe witnessed relatively frequently iconoclast riots as Protestant reform spread. The *Beeldenstorm* was distinct in that it had no legal ground but was so comprehensive, hitting all provinces of the Low Countries in a short time. This was thus clearly related to the unique context of political and religious change. It was in the summer of 1566 that the small underground Calvinist church set out to spread their beliefs more publicly and would become a large popular movement.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Lee Palmer Wandel, *Voracious Idols and Violent Hands. Iconoclasm in Reformation Zurich, Strasbourg, and Basel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 194–98.

<sup>203</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 283 (III).

<sup>204</sup> Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 53–75.

<sup>205</sup> Dierickx, 'Beeldenstorm in de Nederlanden in 1566', 1043–44.

<sup>206</sup> David Freedberg, *Iconoclasts and Their Motives*, Gerson Lecture, Held in the Memory of Horst Gerson (1907–1078) 2 (Maarssen: Gary Schwartz, 1985), 9; Arnade, 'The Rage of the "Canaille": The Logic of Fury in the Iconoclasm Riots of 1566', 111; Dierickx, 'Beeldenstorm in de Nederlanden in 1566', 1045; Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 17.

<sup>207</sup> Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, Koenraad Jonckheere, and Ruben Suykerbuyk, 'Introduction. Beeldenstorm: Iconoclasm in the Sixteenth-Century Low Countries', *Bijdragen En Mededelingen Betreffende de Geschiedenis Der Nederlanden* 131, no. 1 (2016): 6–7.

Nevertheless, the context in which iconoclasm took place does not necessarily explain the rioters' actions: the destruction of images and church interiors. Furthermore, the iconoclasts were a highly diverse group.<sup>208</sup> David Freedberg has identified a few recurring motives that often play a role in instances of iconoclasm. He mentions the wish to deprive the image of the power the iconoclast imagines it has and the belief that damaging images which are symbols of power diminishes the power behind the symbols itself. Both these motives were at play in the destruction that took place in the Low Countries in 1566. This more or less calculated motivation could interplay, on the individual level, with what Freedberg calls more "primitive" feelings and behaviour. The latter come from a less conscious state of mind, where normal social and psychological restraints are abandoned and the destruction incites a rage of iconoclasm in the image-breakers.<sup>209</sup> However, it is important not to dismiss the actions of iconoclasts as nothing more than the result of blind rage, as has been done in the past. The rioters and their motives have often been neglected in historiography because of the embarrassment of iconoclasm. Both the Protestant movement and the political rebels tried to distance themselves from the unpopular iconoclasm, and blame the destruction on unruly mobs. Also Catholics preferred to forget that some iconoclasts had come from their hometowns and blamed foreigners for the destructions made.<sup>210</sup>

The reasons why the parishioners took part in iconoclasm or *gheuserie* and the individual circumstances of their involvement cannot always be uncovered. However, the cases of iconoclasm in Ghent of which we are better informed present an interesting variety that add depth to the general interpretations of iconoclasm. The case of St James is too small to draw general conclusions, but it offers insight into the motives of at least some individuals. Again, we are reading about these motives through the lens of a Catholic parishioner of St James, Marcus van Vaernewijck. Almost all those parishioners known to have taken part in iconoclasm had, apart from their sympathy for the political-religious cause with which iconoclasm was linked, more personal motives for their participation. At least that is how Van Vaernewijck presents them to the reader. He said of the blacksmith Jacob de Pruet that he, with the help of his son Jan de Pruet, had destroyed in St James alone what it would have taken six ordinary men to do. Van

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<sup>208</sup> Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 75–82. Scheerder has divided the iconoclasts into three groups: the more wealthy image-breakers who often had religious motives, the poor iconoclasts who clearly had religious motives, and poor men and women who participated for various other reasons.

<sup>209</sup> Freedberg, *Iconoclasts and Their Motives*, 25–26; Alastair Duke, *Dissident Identities in the Early Modern Low Countries*, ed. Judith Pollmann and Andrew Spicer (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2009), 187–91.

<sup>210</sup> Duke, *Dissident Identities in the Early Modern Low Countries*, 179–81; Judith Pollmann, 'Iconoclasts Anonymous', *Bijdragen En Mededelingen Betreffende de Geschiedenis Der Nederlanden* 131, no. 1 (2016): 155–76.

Vaernewijck added that this was probably because he did not like the pastor of St James, Jan Bave.<sup>211</sup> Van Vaernewijck also accused Jan van der Riviere and other parishioners of having personal motives. The priest Willem Doens had requested that van der Riviere paint the scene of Pentecost and other images on the back of three stone priest seats. The job had not been easy and had cost the painter a lot of money because the stone had absorbed more paint than expected. The wealthy priest was unwilling to pay extra for the job, which resulted in a quarrel between Doens and van der Riviere. So it was no surprise when witnesses claimed they had seen van der Riviere helping to destroy these seats. Van Vaernewijck believed it was a form of revenge. Of course, this could not have been the only reason. Other people had also seen him breaking the high altar in St John's.<sup>212</sup> In addition, van der Riviere was known to have attended hedge preaching and had had his child baptized by Calvinists.<sup>213</sup>

The destructive actions of Jan Martins and Gheeraert van Bijlande are remarkable as well, as both men were members of a guild that had a chapel in the church. Martins was a member (*cnape*) of the guild of second-hand clothes dealers. He was accused of removing his guild's statues from the chapel of the second-hand clothes dealers in St James. He had thrown the statues down in front of his house and set fire to them. It is not clear if there had been an argument within the guild, but his contribution to iconoclasm seems to have been specifically focused on the statues of his guild's chapel. As punishment, the magistracy (only?) demanded that he make a new statue of St Nicholas, of the same size as the original and of equal quality, at his own expense. According to Van Vaernewijck, Martins did pay for a new statue but it was clearly of inferior quality compared to the original. He was not sure if this was the reason for Martins' imprisonment in 1567.<sup>214</sup>

Gheeraert van Bijlande went a step further. He was a rhetorician and a member of the guild of basket makers, and for the guild chapel he had made a beautiful piece of artisanal work made with small baskets.<sup>215</sup> He was also the head workman in the parish church of Melle, a village near Ghent. All this makes his extremely destructive behaviour during the iconoclasm even more remarkable. The night he heard the destruction inside the various church buildings of Ghent, he took his axe and went to help wreck the beguinage ter Hooie, St Joris hospital, the convent of St Clare outside Ghent and "het Rijke Gasthuis". Furthermore, he joined a group of iconoclasts in order to sack two other convents and

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<sup>211</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 209 (I). "waarschijnlijk omdat hij den deken vanden christenen, her Jan Bave die daer pastuer es niet wel en mochte".

<sup>212</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 296-297 (III).

<sup>213</sup> Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 76.

<sup>214</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 22, 23 (III).

<sup>215</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 282 (III): "...een constich stick van cleen mandekins, hanghende an melcanderen met claverkins ende de devijse vanden ghilde, ende van een oorloochsschip".

churches outside Ghent. Along the way he destroyed the stone crosses erected beside the road, and finally, on his arrival, he also wrecked the high altar in the parish church of Melle, where he was the main workman. Talks with a monk there and with a neighbour in Ghent revealed that he sympathized strongly with the *geuzen*, which would have been his motivation for taking part in iconoclasm.<sup>216</sup> In the case of van Bijlande, clearly his participation in the destruction was linked to ideological issues and had little to do with poverty or social marginalization. Nevertheless, his life before iconoclasm seems to have been strongly interwoven with churches and the attack on the parish church of Melle seems to give his actions a personal and impulsive character. This personal aspect was even more evident with de Pruet, van der Riviere and Martins.

As we have seen, the plumber Gyselbrecht Cools came into a totally different category because of his criminal past. The detention of Lievin De Vlieghe, his wife and daughter, on the other hand, seems to have been the result of overzealous Spanish soldiers. The soldiers found a painting portraying a crucifixion in their house and noticed that cuts had been made in it. De Vlieghe and his wife claimed to be innocent and said that their daughter, who was simple or mentally disabled, had got it from someone else. Despite their pleas, the soldiers demanded they be arrested.<sup>217</sup> Although De Vlieghe and his wife claimed to be innocent, the Spanish soldiers' anger about the cuts in the painting was not necessarily overreacting. During the iconoclasm, in many places the destruction of images had taken the form of an almost ritual mutilation of the depictions. Some iconoclasts did this to prove to others that the images had no powers, but others did it to remove the powers that they believed the images possessed.<sup>218</sup>

Another reason for the accusation against De Vlieghe, his wife and daughter might have been the fact that two of Lievin's sons had been accused and convicted of *gheuserie*. Their case is also special, as Van Vaernewijck reported how on 26 May 1567, the first usher (*deurwaarder*) of the Council of Flanders, Daneel De Keijsere, gathered information about the sons of De Vlieghe in the neighbourhood of Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat in St James's parish. At the time, Matheus was already in prison in Brussels. On 28 May, six prominent Catholics from the neighbourhood, including Van Vaernewijck, were summoned to a secret gathering in the Count's Castle to report under oath what they knew about the sons of Lievin De Vlieghe.<sup>219</sup> Obviously, the family De Vlieghe was considered suspect and a lot of effort was put into making a case against the sons.

Whether it was Van Vaernewijck's intention to portray his fellow parishioners who had taken part in iconoclasm in one way or another as a mixed bunch of men with

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<sup>216</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 282-284 (III).

<sup>217</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 24, 25 (III).

<sup>218</sup> Duke, *Dissident Identities in the Early Modern Low Countries*, 187-90; David Freedberg, *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago, 1989).

<sup>219</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 99 (IV).

personal vendettas is not clear. His stress on the individuality of the iconoclasts seems to question the idea that iconoclasm was a major movement in which religion played a decisive role. David de Boer has argued that this was probably Van Vaernewijck's intention. He claims that this perspective was popular and allowed people to see the image-breaking, unlike the spread of heresy, as a temporary secular event. It was a voluntary act of vandalism on communal property. As a result, it was possible to treat the iconoclasts as ordinary criminals who could be judged by secular courts.<sup>220</sup> Of course, Van Vaernewijck's whole account presents a mixed perspective. First of all, he probably knew the fellow parishioners who had participated in iconoclasm personally. His strong anthropological interest led him to describe the events in terms of the individual circumstances and actions of the rioters. Furthermore, one could argue that by giving these parishioners individual motives, he gave the iconoclasts a face and a form of defence. In this way, he took the rioters of St James from the anonymous margins of society and put them in the centre of community life.

Many other parts of Van Vaernewijck's account seem to confirm de Boer's thesis and the idea that various social groups were ashamed about iconoclasm.<sup>221</sup> Van Vaernewijck's initial reaction to the iconoclasts had been to stress their marginal position. He claimed that most iconoclasts were foreigners or unemployed journeymen who had come from outside Ghent.<sup>222</sup> When later in his account it becomes clear that quite a few people from Ghent had been involved in iconoclasm, Van Vaernewijck emphasized that most of them were poor.<sup>223</sup> This was not just a theory; the low social status of most of the iconoclasts in Ghent was confirmed by Delmotte's study, as already discussed. This illustrates the complexity of Van Vaernewijck's analysis of the rioters. On the one hand, by stressing their poverty he aided in the marginalization of the iconoclasts. On the other hand, his detailed descriptions of them and their motives put the iconoclasts back in the picture as fully fledged members of the community with individual and differentiated reasons for their actions. This might be interpreted as a form of defence. Even though he was appalled by their actions, Van Vaernewijck did not get carried away and demonize the iconoclasts.

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<sup>220</sup> de Boer, 'Picking up the Pieces. Catholic Perceptions of Iconoclasm in the Netherlands, 1566-1672'; Pollmann, 'Iconoclasts Anonymous'. It fits also with the above mentioned wish of all parties to distance themselves of the iconoclasm.

<sup>221</sup> Pollmann, 'Iconoclasts Anonymous'.

<sup>222</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 14-16 (IV); Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 62-63.

<sup>223</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 106 (I).

## 2.4 Defiance and communal values

The case of Ghent can also offer new insights into the role of Catholics in the face of iconoclasm. In her book *“Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635”*, Judith Pollmann has stressed the active role of Catholics in the Revolt and in the Catholic renewal after 1585, but there is less discussion of their role and attitudes before the start of the Calvinist republics. In the wake of iconoclasm and the spread of Protestantism, the role of the Catholics was more ambiguous. Pollmann has given several reasons for this ambiguity by mainly looking to the specific religious traditions in the Low Countries and the unique political context. She has also addressed social dynamics, such as a strong reliance on the authorities to take action. De Boer has also argued that because iconoclasm was considered an act of vandalism against the community and not a religious stance, the secular government was expected to take charge of the situation.<sup>224</sup> The Ghent case confirms this idea only partially. Much of the behaviour of traditional Catholics in Ghent on the eve and in the aftermath of iconoclasm can be understood by focusing on their communal ties and values.

The idea of Catholics waiting for the government to take action suggests an obedient populace. According to de Boer, this obedience was deeply ingrained because of the general belief that God had put the government in place to rule over the people. In some places, Catholics were convinced that the magistrate had ordered the image-breaking and, as a result, even took part in iconoclasm as a result of this conviction.<sup>225</sup> However, this form of blind compliance was not visible in Ghent, where the citizens as a whole had already started evading the regulations of the magistrate and higher government in the weeks before the iconoclastic outbreak. Moreover, this did not stop them from claiming they had great respect for civic peace, communal values and the law.<sup>226</sup>

One interesting case that illustrates there were limits to complying with the orders of the magistracy is the reaction of the guilds at a meeting with the magistracy after the first

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<sup>224</sup> de Boer, ‘Picking up the Pieces. Catholic Perceptions of Iconoclasm in the Netherlands, 1566-1672’; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635*; Michal Bauwens, ‘Under Construction? The Catholic Community in Ghent after the Beeldenstorm’, *Bijdragen En Mededelingen Betreffende de Geschiedenis Der Nederlanden* 131, no. 1 (2016): 2.

<sup>225</sup> de Boer, ‘Picking up the Pieces. Catholic Perceptions of Iconoclasm in the Netherlands, 1566-1672’.

<sup>226</sup> Obedience to the government was an important theme. Prominent figures who favoured Calvinism in Ghent, for example, spread the rumour that the Protestant preachers coming to Ghent had permission from the provincial governors. Iconoclasm was also said to be commissioned by the government. See: Scheerder, ‘Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567’, 23, 47, 64; Marc Boone, “‘Cette Frivole, Dampnable et Desraisonnable Bourgeoisie’: De Vele Gezichten van Het Laatmiddeleeuwse Burgerbegrip in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden”, in *Burger*, ed. Joost Kloek and Karin Tilmans, *Nederlandse Begripsgeschiedenis* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2002), 41-47. Boone illustrates how this idea of citizenship and communal values evolved throughout time.

hedge sermons in the summer of 1566. On 27 July, the aldermen summoned all the heads of the guilds to the city hall and explained that all gatherings and thus the hedge preaching went against the Caroline Concession of 1540. The guild members were ordered to advise others against attending the hedge preaching as well. At the end of the meeting, the heads of the craft guilds gave their opinions. Since 1540, the head of the guild had not been a guild man but an outsider, so their reactions should not be generalized as being representative of the whole guild. Eighteen of the 22 heads only affirmed their loyalty to the magistrate in a general statement, without referring to the preaching. A few other heads did add that they would stop attending the hedge preaching and try to dissuade others from going as well. Nicolas Sersanders, the head of the goldsmiths, silversmiths and tinsmiths, only made a carefully worded promise; although they wished to obey the government, they did not want to be held responsible for family members or their employees, over whom most did not have authority.<sup>227</sup> Although all these men claimed obedience, their reactions prove that strict obedience to the government was not the leading value; rather other societal values (guild, family, tradition) determined their behaviour.<sup>228</sup> Later events would highlight this even more.

Van Vaernewijck reported on a large gathering of 223 craftsmen with the magistracy in the wake of iconoclasm. When asked whether they would defend the city and the church if this was necessary, a few blatantly refused and declared they would not defend the papists. The clergy were considered wealthy enough to pay for their own army, they said, and did not deserve the help of ordinary people.<sup>229</sup> Basing himself on the report of the magistracy, Delmotte stated that it was not just a few people who refused to take up arms for the church, but the majority. Even the shooting guild, which had traditionally helped to form the city's guard, especially in the Middle Ages, could not be trusted, as the report of the under-bailiff Pieter van Euverbeke showed.<sup>230</sup> Although several reports seem to point to the strong influence of Reformed ideas, the term Calvinist should be used carefully, as not everyone with anti-clerical opinions or interested in the hedge preaching was Protestant or Calvinist.

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<sup>227</sup> Delmotte, 'Het Calvinisme in de verschillende bevolkingslagen te Gent (1566-1567)', 148-49; Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 34-35.

<sup>228</sup> Ghent had also tradition of civic disobedience and revolt. See Boone and Prak, 'Rulers, Patricians, and Burghers: The Great and the Little Traditions of Urban Revolt in the Low Countries', 100.

<sup>229</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 58 (I).

<sup>230</sup> Delmotte, 'Het Calvinisme in de verschillende bevolkingslagen te Gent (1566-1567)', 149-50; Thomas Buyse, "In Dese Dangereuse Conjuncture Des Tyts" Sociaal Kapitaal van de Schuttersgilden in Gent, Antwerpen En Brussel van Beeldenstorm Tot Het Einde van Het Twaalfjarig Bestand (1566-1621)' (Master's Thesis, Ghent, Ghent University, 2013), 7-8; Marc Lemahieu, *Het Wezen van de Eerste Vlaamse Schuttersgilden: ... Met Eenre Gemeyne Begeerten Omme Lavenisse Haerer Zielen ...* (Brugge: Koninklijk Hoofdgilde Sint-Sebastiaan, 2008), 75.



On 2 August 1566, in response to a letter from Margaret of Parma, arrangements were made for the formation of a special militia made up of the male citizens of Ghent. This involved dividing the city into 17 quarters. The parish of St James was divided into two quarters.<sup>231</sup> Each of the city's quarters<sup>232</sup> was commanded by two superintendents. These superintendents headed the *vingteniers*, who were in theory in charge of 19 men, but this could be more. All *vingteniers* swore loyalty to the king and the magistracy, and in turn required the men under them to take the same oath. In the St James parish, one of the quarters was headed by the nobles Adriaen Borluut and Anthon Uutenhove, who acted as superintendents and had six *vingteniers* under them. Van Vaernewijck was one of them. He reported that it was not easy to get the men sworn in. He tried to persuade 40 men to swear allegiance, as he had been asked to recruit more than the theoretical limit of 19 men if they were fine and good men. However, when the citizens heard that their names would be reported to the magistracy and that they had to be ready for action whenever the magistracy called them, many dropped out, again saying that they did not want to be guards for the papists, only for the king and the law. Van Vaernewijck tried to convince them that there was a more general communal aspect to this guard and that it was meant to protect themselves, their wives and children and not the priests. They did not fall for this and replied "that is what they tell us, but in the end it will come to protecting the papists. Let them protect themselves, they have persecuted us long enough. Why would we defend that scum!"<sup>233</sup> Van Vaernewijck regarded these reactions as proof that the *vingteniers* could not rely on their own men and that if they did defend an attack against the Church they had reason to fear for their own lives.<sup>234</sup>

By this time, rumours were circulating that a large group of vandals was moving through West Flanders and would soon be in to Ghent to punish the papists and stop the idolatry. Van Vaernewijck was convinced that the *gheusgezinden* of Ghent, some of whom he believed were militia members, would consider these "rebels" as friends and prefer to kill their leader (*vingtenier*) rather than the "looters". The aldermen of Ghent themselves had doubts about loyalty and on 20 August they demanded that the militia take a new oath of loyalty in which they explicitly promised to also protect the clergy against any attacks. This demand was not open-ended; the *vingteniers* were expected to write down the names of those of good will and those of bad will. Some superintendents asked the

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<sup>231</sup> Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 38-41.

<sup>232</sup> Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 376. The quarters used for military purposes were different from the fiscal quarters, of which there were 13 and also covered areas outside the city walls. The borders of the first fiscal quarter matched more or less those of the entire St James parish.

<sup>233</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 57-58 (I).

<sup>234</sup> See Suykerbuyk's article on the defenses and protection other towns came up with: Ruben Suykerbuyk, 'De Sacra Militia Contra Iconomachos. Civic Strategies to Counter Iconoclasm in the Low Countries (1566)', *Bijdragen En Mededelingen Betreffende de Geschiedenis Der Nederlanden* 131, no. 1 (2016): 15-35.

magistrate to change the oath and have the *vingteniers* only list the numbers of those willing and unwilling to take up arms to defend the clergy, instead of having to give their names. The leaders did not want to fall into disgrace with their neighbours for having acted as spies. In the end, this group gained the upper hand and even those *vingteniers* who only had men willing to defend the clergy gave the number of how many had sworn the oath and no names. This mostly negative reaction to the call of the magistrate and the *vingteniers* is striking. Large groups, sometimes whole neighbourhoods, gathered together to discuss the call without giving the *vingteniers* a clear reply. All kinds of excuses were given not to join the militia and as Van Vaernewijck saw it, of the 40 men he had approached, only four could ultimately be trusted to do the job. Many other *vingteniers* gave similar reports to the magistrate.<sup>235</sup>

The Ghent citizenry felt as if the magistrate was demanding that they risk their own lives and those of their families for the sake of the papists. This was asking too much, as the clergy had brought these problems on themselves “by their bad lifestyle, avarice, pride and tyranny over simple people that only wanted to forsake the world and follow the narrow path as Christ had taught”.<sup>236</sup> This stance proves that compliance with government orders had clear limits in Ghent. Although most men claimed to respect the magistracy and the city, in practice, a large group openly refused to obey. They were convinced that protecting the community had priority over defending the clergy. For some, this idea was strengthened by their great love for their family and neighbours, while for others it was anti-clerical feelings or direct sympathy for Protestant ideas. Moreover, the *vingteniers* did not want to go so far as to discredit their fellow citizens because of their refusal to join the militia. A mix of motivations seems to have rendered Ghent a disobedient city (again).

We have numbers for this “division” within Ghent, as parts of the reports have survived to the present day. Delmotte found the official registered opinion of 1767 men out of a total of about 4000 who were considered for the guard. Of this group, only 332 people (18%) were prepared to defend the church and the clergy against attack. Based on these sources, the parish of Our Lady in the seigniory of St Peter's seems to have been the most anti-clerical parish. Only 29 of the 260 men that could be traced in the records (11%) were willing to protect the Catholic clergy. Delmotte explained this by pointing to the marginal location and poor economic status of the parish. Many poor people, including people who came from outside Ghent and who worked as apprentices (*knaapschap*) and

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<sup>235</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 59-60 (I).

<sup>236</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 59-60 (I).

beggars, lived here. The hedge preaching also usually took place in the district of St Peter's, outside Heuvelpoort or Peterseliepoort.<sup>237</sup>

This disobedience was not only typical of Ghent. In Ypres, Tournai, Oudenaarde, Antwerp and Eeklo, there were similar reactions from the population when asked to defend the clergy and stop the hedge preaching. In Bruges, the group refusing to protect the church was a minority that could easily be marginalized.<sup>238</sup> The opposition in Ghent convinced the aldermen that the situation was tense, but they did not know what to do. According to Van Vaernewijck, the city no longer closed its gates. The gunnery had been removed in 1540 and the city had no other weapons. Certain city gates had even been taken down. Furthermore, the people were not used to war and those who had to defend the city were poorly armed and, as discussed above, could not really be trusted.<sup>239</sup> Ghent felt more vulnerable than ever and looked for external help. On 21 August 1566, the city council of Ghent wrote to at least 13 noblemen, asking them to come immediately and assist in defending the city against a possible revolt.<sup>240</sup> Most likely, their help came too late.

Opposition to the official policy on religious matters and heresy seems to have been widespread in Ghent. The people's attendance at Protestant sermons and the refusal to help protect the clergy illustrate this. It also puts the iconoclasm of 1566 in a different light, even though only a minority of the Ghent citizenry took part in the destruction. It is important to note that the groups that took part in iconoclasm and the groups that had shown reluctance to protect the church before the destruction were not necessarily the same. For example, there was not one goldsmith or silversmith among the iconoclasts, although many from their guilds were influenced by Reformed ideas and had refused to protect the Church. As we have already seen, very few of the merchants and craftsmen, who had attended the hedge preaching in large numbers, would be convicted of image-breaking.<sup>241</sup> In addition, certain forms of disobedience were aimed at helping the church. Without waiting for an initiative from the city council or the ecclesiastical authorities, some citizens, brotherhoods and guild members started removing images and altars from their parish church to prevent their destruction. The aldermen even questioned the priests of St James, St Nicolas and St Michael about this. In St James, the pastors had

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<sup>237</sup> Delmotte, 'Het Calvinisme in de verschillende bevolkingslagen te Gent (1566-1567)', 154; Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 59-60 (I).

<sup>238</sup> Suykerbuyk, 'De Sacra Militia Contra Iconomachos. Civic Strategies to Counter Iconoclasm in the Low Countries (1566)'.

<sup>239</sup> Delmotte, 'Het Calvinisme in de verschillende bevolkingslagen te Gent (1566-1567)', 152-56; Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 37-42.

<sup>240</sup> SAG, Series 94 bis, no 8, fo 248, 249. Folio 249 is a copy of the letter but has two extra names on it: Lord of Loovelde instead of Lord of Coobele and also Lievin van Casele.

<sup>241</sup> Delmotte, 'Het Calvinisme in de verschillende bevolkingslagen te Gent (1566-1567)', 162.

demanded that the under-sexton put back the three statues he had removed without their permission. They had a hard time preventing most forms of “safeguarding” because of the crowds gathered in the church.<sup>242</sup> Unlike many of the inhabitants and the local government, who were expecting turmoil, the priests of the parish churches seemed to have been less aware of the dangers, or at least less willing to take immediate action. However, by 21 August the danger was considered serious enough to remove more valuables from the churches for safekeeping. After this was done in St Bavo, the chaplains allowed the guilds and brotherhoods to safeguard the images and valuables in their own chapels. Not everybody came with the best intentions, however. Large crowds of people gathered, making this a very chaotic event. In St James too, the day before the iconoclastic outbreak, many children and young people came in the church yelling, showed disrespect for the altar and pulpit and even took some of the images.<sup>243</sup>

During the Wonder Year, the group of reform-minded people in Ghent had grown. As we have seen, the proportion of people interested in hedge preaching and Protestant ideas was larger and differed from the group of iconoclasts. According to Delmotte, 12% to 13% of the Ghent population was Calvinist. He calculated this figure based on the act of submission, which a group of Calvinists brought to the city council in January 1567. This legislation was the result of negotiations between the Count of Egmont and the leading Calvinists of Ghent and gave the Calvinists certain rights in exchange for their submission to the authorities.<sup>244</sup> Johan Decavele believes this percentage should be even higher, as Delmotte based his calculation on a total population of 50,000, while Ghent had between 42,000 and 45,000 people at the time.<sup>245</sup> However, Delmotte’s assumption that all those who did sign were Calvinist and their families with them – 1400 to 1500 family heads signed – should be nuanced. First of all, the city council noted that many of those who had signed were not inhabitants of Ghent.<sup>246</sup> If this is true, Delmotte’s percentages are in fact an exaggerated figure. Furthermore, the men who signed the petition defending the sermons were not necessarily Calvinists as we now understand the term. Openness to Protestant ideas does not automatically imply that these men made a confessional choice.

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<sup>242</sup> Scheerder, ‘Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567’, 41, 57–59.

<sup>243</sup> Scheerder, 58–59.

<sup>244</sup> For more on the role of the Count of Egmont see: Soen, *Vredehandel. Adellijke En Habsburgse Verzoeningspogingen Tijdens de Nederlandse Opstand.*, 70–77; Liesbeth Geevers, ‘Gevallen Vazallen. De Integratie van Oranje, Egmont En Horn in de Spaans-Habsburgse Monarchie (1559-1567)’ (doctoral dissertation, Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam, 2008).

<sup>245</sup> Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 636; Decavele, *Vlaanderen Tussen Spanje En Oranje. Willem de Zwijger En de Lage Landen in de Zestiende Eeuw*, 34.

<sup>246</sup> SAG, Series 94 bis, nr. 8, fo. 204.

And even if these men had Protestant leanings, their wives and children did not necessarily hold the same views.<sup>247</sup>

Nevertheless, the Wonder Year dealt the Catholic Church a strong blow. The Calvinist preaching had intensified throughout the summer of 1566 and had attracted huge numbers, the Calvinist consistory had organized itself publicly and about 34 men from Ghent are mentioned in the sources as having served as elders and deacons. They had even received permission from the Count of Egmont to build a temple for their religious services. In addition, the relationship between Catholics and their parish church and Catholic rituals altered during this period.<sup>248</sup> In order to prevent further defragmentation of the Catholic Church, the authorities took concrete measures at the end of the Wonder Year. The men of Ghent were forced to swear the oath of loyalty to the government and the Roman Catholic Church. Those who refused had to pay a fine of 10 pounds parisis and hand in their arms. This decision and the men's reactions to it prove that Catholicism was under pressure at this time. On 26 February 1567, the heads of the families living in Lange Munt, the Vrijdagmarkt and Onderstraat, three wealthy neighbourhoods in the St James parish, were summoned to swear this oath. However, according to Jan van de Vivere, only five men from Lange Munt and four from the Vrijdagmarkt were willing to swear the oath. Two days later people from the other streets of the St James parish were asked to come to the city council. According to Van Vaernewijck, who was present at the time, only six of the 50 family heads of Korte Steendam were prepared to swear loyalty to the Catholic Church. For the other neighbourhoods in St James, wrote Van Vaernewijck, the balance was more equal but the majority did not take the oath. Even the people of Sint-Jacobsnieuwstraat, which he considered a very Catholic neighbourhood, was split: eight people were for and six were against the oath. Again, they said they were willing to protect the king and swear loyalty to him, and they were also willing to swear not to harm or attack any priest or convent, but they did not wish to promise to protect them.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> Delmotte, 'Het Calvinisme in de verschillende bevolkingslagen te Gent (1566-1567)', 163.

<sup>248</sup> Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 163, 169-75; Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 641; Johan Decavele, 'Wonderjaar En Beeldenstorm', in *Het Eind van Een Rebelse Droom* (Ghent: Stadsbestuur Gent, 1984), 22-24. Decavele's analysis showed that the large majority of consistory members belonged to the most wealthy people of Ghent society (with a capital of more than 1000 guilders). For example, the elders of the consistory were the attorneys Pieter de Rijcke, Corneis Teymont, Jan de Vettere, Jacob van Migrode, Christoffel de la Becque and Jacob Tayaert, the prosecutors Jan Pijls, Jan Rutinck and Jan de Coninck, the nobleman Jacob van der Haghen, schoolteacher Christiaan de Rijcke, doctor Cornelis van Reiable, merchants Lieven Toc and Jan de Vos, the thread-twister Abraham Rossaert and the cleric Jacob Lobberjoos.

<sup>249</sup> Delmotte, 'Het Calvinisme in de verschillende bevolkingslagen te Gent (1566-1567)', 165; Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 132-133 (II); Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 196-200; Arnade, *Beggars, Iconoclasts, and Civic Patriots. The Political Culture of the Dutch Revolt*. Van Vaernewijck described the name calling: "papisten, vlabackers en ijpocriten".

As before, anti-clericalism and the desire to protect their kin played a primary role, just as it had done during the formation of the militia before the outbreak of iconoclasm, but there was more. In the first days after the call to swear the oath, people were pressurized not to do so. When Lievin De Moor and Jan Serlippens of Lange Munt left the town hall after they had sworn the oath, they were called “papists, flatterers and hypocrites” by children and young men. However, in the following days and weeks the climate shifted in the city, probably as the result of the changing political balance. The whole process took about six weeks and in the end, about two-thirds of the men swore loyalty to the Catholic religion. In April 1567, the people of Ghent were given a last chance to swear the oath.<sup>250</sup>

These events can be interpreted in different ways. One interpretation is that they reflect the fluidity of religious and social identities in this period. According to J. J. Woltjer, traditional Christianity was not strictly defined in the period before 1560 and came in many forms. With the rise of Protestantism, an even greater range of religious ideas flooded the Low Countries. Some people made a clear stance for Protestantism (in its various forms) or for the Tridentine reforms of the Catholic Church, but most people belonged to a “middle group”. They considered themselves traditional Christians but could also have Reformed ideas or even be openly anti-clerical. Marnef, who studied 16<sup>th</sup>-century Antwerp, noticed this broad middle group that seemed to be rather flexible, depending on the political context.<sup>251</sup> In Ghent too, as the political pressure increased many people gave in. However, about one-third of the men refused to take the oath demanded by the magistrate. The fluidity of the majority can thus be explained by pragmatism in the face of changing political circumstances.

However, the term “fluidity” should only be used if we interpret the refusal to defend the churches and the clergy as the result of shifting religious ideas, or of less outspoken or vague opinions that kept people in the “middle”. This middle group would have existed in Ghent as well, but there could also have been social and political reasons behind the

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<sup>250</sup> Delmotte, ‘Het Calvinisme in de verschillende bevolkingslagen te Gent (1566-1567)’, 165–66; Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 133-134 (II); Scheerder, ‘Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567’, 196–99.

<sup>251</sup> J.J. Woltjer, *Tussen Vrijheidsstrijd en burgeroorlog: Over de Nederlandse opstand, 1555-1580* (Amsterdam, 1994), pp. 14–17; G. Marnef, ‘Protestant conversions in an age of Catholic Reformation: The case of sixteenth-century Antwerp’, in ‘Protestant conversions in an age of Catholic Reformation: The case of sixteenth-century Antwerp’, *The Low Countries as a crossroads of religious beliefs*, *Intersections Yearbook for Early Modern Studies* 3 (Leiden, Boston, 2004), pp. 33–47, at pp. 34–36; G. Marnef, ‘The changing face of Calvinism in Antwerp, 1550-1585’, in *Calvinism in Europe 1540-1620* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 143–59, at p. 150; A. Pietsch, ‘Messbesuch für Anfänger und Fortgeschrittene zur Ambiguität der konfessionellen Zugehörigkeit’, in B. Stollberg-Rilinger and A. Pietsch (eds.), *Konfessionelle Ambiguität. Uneindeutigkeit und Verstellung als religiöse Praxis in der Frühen Neuzeit* (München, 2013), pp. 238–66.

refusal of so many to swear the oath. The majority did not want to break with the Church, but they found that it was more important to protect their own lives and the lives of their families and neighbours than the clergy. Many traditional Christians were also convinced that the clergy were responsible for most of the criticism directed at the Church and the Church was considered wealthy enough to protect itself.<sup>252</sup> Anti-clericalism was thus not necessarily a sign of widespread acceptance of Reformation ideas, but it had been reinforced during the previous years because of the link between the clergy and the Spanish Inquisition.<sup>253</sup>

The arguments used against the formation of the militia before the outbreak of iconoclasm have already shown the importance of civic peace in Ghent. In particular, by the end of the Wonder Year the Ghent citizenry knew that a significant minority in the city had Protestant sympathies. If they swore the oath, it would definitely divide the community. Their initial reluctance can thus also be linked to the wish to keep the traditional community from further polarization. During the Wonder Year, the focus on maintaining the civic peace was a powerful factor that kept the community relatively tolerant of dissident religious opinions and practices. The temporary religious freedom was, however, only possible as long as the authorities did not oppose it or turned a blind eye. This was the case in the months following iconoclasm, but by the end of March 1567 it became clear that the various levels of government had started to align again and would no longer accept dissidence. Swearing the oath was the only way to prevent more trouble, both as an individual and as a community. The persistent refusal of one-third of the people indicates religious or political motives as the refusal brought no social advantages. By the end of March, the magistracy of Ghent forced eight schoolteachers to close their school because they had not sworn the oath.<sup>254</sup> However, this does not mean that all those who refused were members of the Reformed Church. As we have already seen, Delmotte and Scheerder's figure of 12% to 13% of the population being Calvinist was probably too high an estimate.<sup>255</sup> But it does reveal that loyalty to the Catholic Church was not a high priority for many people in Ghent.

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<sup>252</sup> Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635*, 46–50, 60.

<sup>253</sup> Alastair Duke, 'A Legend in the Making: News of the "Spanish Inquisition" in the Low Countries in German Evangelical Pamphlets, 1646-1550', *Dutch Review of Church History* 77, no. 2 (1997): 125–44.

<sup>254</sup> Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 202.

<sup>255</sup> Scheerder, 167–69.

## 2.5 Punishing dissidence

The punishments of the convicted group of parishioners accused of image-breaking and *gheuserie* varied. Some were executed, others were banished and their goods confiscated. One group of iconoclasts was already captured in the first two weeks after iconoclasm.<sup>256</sup> A large group fled Ghent before the end of the Wonder Year and never presented themselves before the court. Most of them were banished by the Council of Troubles and lost all their possessions to the government. The son of the iconoclast Jacob de Pruet, Jan de Pruet, was imprisoned for participating in the image-breaking, but was later released and forced to remain in the city of Ghent for six years.<sup>257</sup> His father Jacob de Pruet escaped being apprehended by fleeing across the roofs of houses.<sup>258</sup> Gyselbrecht Cools was hanged at the Korenmarkt as early as September 1566<sup>259</sup>, while Matteus de Vlieghe, Pieter Zoetins and Frederick de Buck were beheaded in 1568.<sup>260</sup> Gillis Coorne and Jacob Crispijn were hanged at St Veerleplein that same year.<sup>261</sup> The iconoclast Jan van der Riviere was beheaded at the beginning of 1569. Pieter de Bellemakere, Gooris van den Boomgaerde, Jan van Evenackere, Lievin Henricx, Marc de Mil, Charles Oetghier, Jan Pijls, Christoffel Uutwaes and Jacob de Pruet were banished after they fled. A few men were relatively lucky. After a short imprisonment, Liefkin van der Vennen, Jan Martins, Joos Meijeraert, Jacques de Vlieghe, his father Lievin de Vlieghe and Lievin's wife were set free. It is not clear what happened to the daughter. When Lievin and his wife were already free, she was still in prison.<sup>262</sup>

The punishment depended on the impact of the crime on the "social body" and the community. In order to cure the body, the infected part had to be amputated.<sup>263</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> Scheerder, 118–19.

<sup>257</sup> Scheerder, 'Documenten in verband met confiscatie van roerende goederen van hervormingsgezinden te Gent (1567-1568)', 130.

<sup>258</sup> Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 116.

<sup>259</sup> Scheerder, 220; Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 226-227 (I).

<sup>260</sup> Scheerder, 'Documenten in verband met confiscatie van roerende goederen van hervormingsgezinden te Gent (1567-1568)', 207, 221.

<sup>261</sup> Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 222; Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 304-310 (III).

<sup>262</sup> *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 61–65, 272–79, 281–82, 303–305 (III), 14–16 (IV); Scheerder, 'Documenten in verband met confiscatie van roerende goederen van hervormingsgezinden te Gent (1567-1568)', 129, 130, 207, 208, 211, 220, 221; Verheyden, *Het Gentse Martyrologium (1530-1595)*, 1945:40–41.

<sup>263</sup> Pieter Spierenburg, *The Spectacle of Suffering. Executions and the Evolution of Repression: From a Preindustrial Metropolis to the European Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 5–6; Danielle M. Westerhof,



Depending on the crime, the convicted were treated differently, and the attitude of the person sentenced to death and the form and execution of the punishment influenced how bystanders reacted to an execution. In his chronicle, Van Vaernewijck describes the reactions to many of the executions in Ghent. As only a small proportion of Ghent citizens underwent this fate, some descriptions of the punishments of people from outside St James are also discussed below. This can help us to understand what these "heretics" believed and how their neighbours and especially Van Vaernewijck assessed them and their punishments. Koen Lamont has argued that Van Vaernewijck's chronicle reflects a critical attitude towards the persecution of heresy, but many passages also show his approval for punishment of heresy. Vaernewijck had been *schepen van the Keure* in 1564 and thus must have been directly involved in the persecution and punishment of heretics. On the other hand, he was also personally involved with and knew many citizens of Ghent and their opinions.<sup>264</sup>

The cases he describes also illustrate that the convicted had a diverse range of ideas. On 30 March 1568, the attorney Willem Rutsemeelis was hanged. His confessor was the Dominican Lievinus Van den Bossche, who later declared that Rutsemeelis had died as a good Christian, according to the faith of the Holy Roman Church.<sup>265</sup> Whether or not he really had confessed to being a Catholic and his beliefs followed the official Catholic doctrine will remain unknown. Whatever his ideas might have been, his confession to the priest seems to have been enough to reconcile him with the Church. Van Vaernewijck and other bystanders who witnessed his execution were convinced that this person died as a Roman Catholic. An entirely different case involved the roof worker Jan Rooze, who did not say a word and seemed emotionless before he was hanged, even though the Franciscan monks begged him to confess the Catholic faith.<sup>266</sup> In contrast to Rutsemeelis, Rooze was not buried in consecrated ground.<sup>267</sup>

Some descriptions of the executions give more detailed information on the ideas of the convicted. Lieven De Smet was a prominent Calvinist who had brought several preachers to Ghent.<sup>268</sup> He used the execution platform to confess his faith. He clearly stated that he did not believe specific dogmas of the Catholic Church and denied, for example, the existence of purgatory and the need to pray for the dead. Interestingly, Van Vaernewijck

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'Amputating the Traitor: Healing the Social Body in Public Executions for Treason in Late Medieval England', in *The Ends of the Body. Identity and Community in Medieval Culture*, ed. Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Jill Ross (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 180–85.

<sup>264</sup> Lamont, *Het Wereldbeeld van Een Zestiende-Eeuwse Gentenaar* Marcus van Vaernewijck, 81, 257.

<sup>265</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 303, 304 (III).

<sup>266</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 305 (III). "Deze en liet gheen sprake uut hem ghaen vanden eersten totten laetsten, ende hadde Fremenueren, die hem tgheloove anriepen, maer hij en andtwoordde haer niet, ende bleef alzo onberoerlic als oft hem niet anghעהgaen en hadde, ende wart alzo ghehanghen."

<sup>267</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 312, 313 (III).

<sup>268</sup> Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 23.

recorded this, but felt the need to add why De Smet's ideas were wrong. His counterarguments referred to the first disciples, the Holy Scripture and the long tradition of the Church. These insertions prove Van Vaernewijck's wish to defend his faith and gives his account a polemic character. The reader is left in no doubt about what Van Vaernewijck believed was the right faith or on whose side he was. Nevertheless, his descriptions seem rather detailed and truthful. Although Rutsemeelis, Rooze and De Smet had aberrant ideas about Christianity, they were still treated differently from the four Anabaptists who were burned at the stake after them. During their execution, soldiers forced the people present to move back in order to prevent them from hearing what the Anabaptists were saying. Van Vaernewijck found this justifiable as he thought that their words were so appealing and contagious that they would seduce the poor.<sup>269</sup> Indeed, the heresy of Anabaptism was considered more dangerous and seductive than other forms of Protestantism because it was also linked to social rebellion.<sup>270</sup>

In April 1568, another three young men were hanged. They clearly showed remorse and Van Vaernewijck related in an emotional tone how all the bystanders witnessed the convicted fall piously on their knees and passionately beg God for forgiveness, confessing their mistakes. They claimed to understand the crime they had committed against the Holy Christian Church and against the government and admitted that they deserved to die.<sup>271</sup> This dramatic confession had a strong impact on the spectators. One of the men asked the bystanders to pray for his poor soul with a paternoster and an Ave Maria, which they did with compassion. Van Vaernewijck approved of this reaction and stated that

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<sup>269</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 310 (III). "wel ende rechtelic daerinne doende, mits dat haer woorden zoo antreckende zijn ende besmettende, om taerme ghemeene volc voetsel uut te zughen".

<sup>270</sup> Duke, *Dissident Identities in the Early Modern Low Countries*, 90–97; Guido Marnef, 'Multiconfessionalism in a Commercial Metropolis: The Case of 16th-Century Antwerp', in *A Companion to Multiconfessionalism in the Early Modern World*, ed. Thomas Max Safley, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 28 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2011), 75–78; A.L.E. Verheyden, 'De Doopsgezinden Te Gent (1530-1630)', *Bijdragen Tot de Geschiedenis En Oudheidkunde* 1943 (n.d.): 97–130; Verheyden, *Het Gentse Martyrologium (1530-1595)*, 1945:X–XII; Hermina Joldersma and Grijp, eds., *Elisabeth's Manly Courage. Testimonials and Songs of Martyred Anabaptist Women in the Low Countries*, Women of the Reformation Series 3 (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), 9–13. Marnef also explains the stricter repression of Anabaptists by pointing to their more marginal background. As they played a less important role in Antwerp's economy, the repression of heresy in Antwerp focused more on Anabaptists. Verheyden has given concrete numbers for their persecution in Ghent during the 16<sup>th</sup> century: of the 252 people who were executed because of their faith, 146 were Anabaptists. Apart from 50 iconoclasts, there were also 30 Calvinists and two Lutherans. The beliefs of the others were not known.

<sup>271</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 19, 20 (IV). "want die haer zaghen verwijzen zegghen, hoe minlic zij vielen over beede haer knien, ende hoe hertelic dat zij heere ende wet vergheffenesse baden, belijdende voor alle de weerelt haer abusen ende mesgrijpinghe, hoe dat zij jeghen die Helighe Christen Keercke, ende jeghen die overheijt grootelic mesdaen ende wel de doot verdient hadden. [...]"

these men “did not die as heretics or criminals but as sincere, Christian and virtuous men of whom he could only write in tears of gratitude towards God and compassion towards his fellow men”.<sup>272</sup> The deep emotional involvement of Van Vaernewijck and the bystanders with the “conversion” of their fellow citizens is remarkable. The reconciliation of these “misguided” townsmen seems to have been viewed positively by everyone, and despite the fact that compassion was shown and tears were flowing, Van Vaernewijck did not question the execution itself. Executions remained a necessary part of the justice system.<sup>273</sup> In his diary, he mentioned that this was in agreement with the edict (*bloedplakkaat*) that stated that heretics who repented also had to be executed.<sup>274</sup>

There is no strong differentiation in his approach to iconoclasts and those convicted for heresy, as De Boer has made. In his account, Van Vaernewijck even gave six separate points for justifying the death penalty for heretics, proving he was not a moderate Catholic.<sup>275</sup> In particular, those guilty of spreading heresy deserved capital punishment.<sup>276</sup> Of course, the fact that he extensively defended the execution of purely religious dissidents can be interpreted as meaning that he felt most people did not agree with this approach to heresy and therefore he had to give arguments to defend it. Indeed, when defending the punishments he sometimes explicitly referred to the people who opposed the harsh sentences for heretics: “de ghene die zouden willen zegghen, dat zij

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<sup>272</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 18–21 (IV). “Een van de mannen vroeg de omstaanders dat zij zouden willen over zijn aarme ziele over haer knien eenen Paternoster ende Ave Maria lesen, dat welcke tvolck met compassien beweecht zijnde, zoo wel Spaensche soldaten als andere, alzo ghedaen hebben, vallende up haer knien up de maerct oft kelsije, dwelc zeer eerlic ende goddelic ghedaen was, [...]ende elc omme gheghaen hebbende up tschavot, en zijn niet als bouwen oft heretijcken, maer als zeer christelicke ende duechdelicke mannen ghestorven, dat welcke ic zonder tranen niet en hebbe connen scrijven, van dancbaerheijt tot Godt ende compassie tot mijnen even naesten beweecht zijnde.”

<sup>273</sup> Spierenburg, *The Spectacle of Suffering. Executions and the Evolution of Repression: From a Preindustrial Metropolis to the European Experience*, 54–55, 81–109. Executions, of course, were never considered pleasant, but rather as something edifying, an example. In that sense, executions were regarded as positive.

<sup>274</sup> Lamont, *Het Wereldbeeld van Een Zestiende-Eeuwse Gentenaar* Marcus van Vaernewijck, 258.

<sup>275</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566–1568*, 24–25 (IV). “zoo dat zij bij dien ende bij ghodelicke ende weerlicke rechten, som wel in VI punten die doot verdient hadden. Om dit te prouven, zoo willen wij daer toe nemen hem die scheen de eerlicste te zijne vande bovenghenoumde, te weten Lievin De Smet”.

<sup>276</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 5–6, 7, 17–18, 19, 21, 24–26 (IV); Lamont, *Het Wereldbeeld van Een Zestiende-Eeuwse Gentenaar* Marcus van Vaernewijck, 257–68. Lamont has discussed Van Vaernewijck's nuanced but strict views on heresy in detail. Van Vaernewijck writes: “Tes ooc groote blamacie ende ingurie een ketter zijn”, “hij starf om tvervalschen vanden woerde Godts, ghelijck een valsch muntenare sConinx munte conterfeijt ende corruppeert”, “Wij mochten willen, dat die nieu predicanten in pasteije vleesch ghecapt hadden gheweest, dan dat zij zoo menighe ziele verleet ende bedorven hebben, die nemmermeer om winnen oft om bekeeren en zullen zijn”, “zoo dat naer alle redenen ende rechten wel moet ende zal den mont ghestopt werden vande ghene die zouden willen zegghen, dat zij ontschuldich oft onnooselic steerven, ende dat men over hemlien de doot andoende tijranniseert”.

ontschuldich oft onnooselic steerven, ende dat men over hemlien de doot andoende tijranniseert”.<sup>277</sup> He also explained that it was necessary to obey the government and referred to a text by St Paul to prove it.<sup>278</sup> This polemical side and strong aversion to Protestantism was not unique to Van Vaernewijck. Many other Catholics who recorded the events or troubles in their diaries wrote accusations, mocked the Reformed religion and opposed the spread of Reformed ideas. Pollmann has mentioned, among others, Nicolas Soldoyer, Katherina Boudewyns, Anna Bijns and the Ghent cloth merchant Cornelis van Campene, whose account will be used in this study as well.<sup>279</sup>

However, other parts of his account clearly show that Van Vaernewijck and many other townspeople found that the *ghuesche* troublemakers or sectarians were being punished too harshly.<sup>280</sup> The persecution and rising number of executions persuaded many people of Ghent, including priests, to demand that no more names of *gheusen* be given to the higher authorities. This was also for the sake of the city’s name, which would be discredited by these events.<sup>281</sup> Clearly, Van Vaernewijck himself and many other burghers of Ghent had a high regard for the good name of the city and civic peace. Furthermore, he used the phrase “onghesnoerde tonghen” (blabbermouths) for those who denounced fellow citizens to the higher authorities, which indicates that he believed that not everyone who had been involved needed to be punished. Van Vaernewijck thus also

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<sup>277</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 24-25 (IV). “those who would want to say that they [heretics] died innocently and that they were terrorized to death”.

<sup>278</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 200 (II). “Want heeren zullen ende moeten heeren zijn, als bouwen bouwen zijn. Die een ghemeente dient en dient niemant. In de weerelt moet een oorden ende beschick zijn. Daerom zecht wel Paulus: die de hoverheijt wederstaet, die wederstaet die ordinantie Godts.”

<sup>279</sup> Pollmann, ‘Countering the Reformation in France and the Netherlands: Clerical Leadership and Catholic Violence 1560-1585’, 93-94; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635*, 61-66, 122.

<sup>280</sup> Scheerder, ‘Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567’, 121; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635*, 18, 19. Pollmann has also analysed this more moderate side of Van Vaernewijck.

<sup>281</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 15 (IV). “[...]want ziende die groote vervolghijnghe ende bloetsturtijnghe over die ghuesen, zoo werden veel priesteren ende gheestelicke mannen beweecht ende ooc veel weerlicke catholijcque, om meerder bloetsturtijnghe te mijden, zoo dat zij (al wisten zij wel wie daer inne beschuldich hadden gheweest) niet openbaren noch noumen en wilden, ende verboden sommighe costers ende keerckendienaers, die onghesnoerde tonghen hadden, die sommighe personen, die haer mesgrepen hadden, noumende waren, dat zij zulcx niet meer doen en zouden; want schepenen en sochten ooc niet die groote multitude van tanbringhen van zulcke mesdagighe, die stadt warter ooc bij gheblameert.” See also pp. 5-6, 17-18, 19-21, 24 (IV): “maer vele dochten, dat zij veel redelicker ghedaen hadden, dat zij metten verdoolden meinsche compassie ende medelijde ghehadt hadden”, “tVolck vander stadt ghijnck dees deerlicheijt zoo naer, dat zijt niet zeer en begheerden te ziene”, “zoo werden veel priesteren ende gheestelicke mannen beweecht ende ooc veel weerlicke catholijcque, om meerder bloetsturtijnghe te mijden, zoo dat zij (al wisten zij wel wie daer inne beschuldich hadden gheweest) niet openbaren noch noumen en wilden”.

made a plea for compassion for certain wrongdoers.<sup>282</sup> He was definitely not the only one. It was clear that many people abhorred the cruelty of the Spanish soldiers in their treatment of the prisoners who were being executed, especially after the arrival of Alva.<sup>283</sup>

Already before iconoclasm, the idea that heresy was being punished too harshly had gained popularity, both among ordinary people and local political figures.<sup>284</sup> When the magistrate of Ghent was trying to form the guard in the weeks before iconoclasm, Van Vaernewijck heard similar criticism. Men refused to contribute to the guard and one of the reasons for their refusal to protect the clergy was de “tjirannije over de onnoosele ende onbeschuldighe, die haer gheerne vander weerelt vervremden ende aftrecken zouden ende den nauwen wech (die Christus leert) inneghaen”.<sup>285</sup> Although the *Beeldenstorm* complicated matters and crimes other than heresy had to be punished, there was a continuity between the protests before and after iconoclasm.

Despite the fact that Van Vaernewijck was a proponent of the death penalty for obstinate heretics, he strongly opposed cruelty.<sup>286</sup> He was relieved when prisoners were freed<sup>287</sup> and made pleas for compassion for those who were to be executed for heresy.<sup>288</sup> This plea for compassion, consisting of about 20 arguments, was even more extensive than his plea for the execution of heretics. Van Vaernewijck stated, among other things, that these heretics had been Christians like them and they were defective just like all of Adam’s children, but they had been misled by Satan dressed as an angel of light. Although they had been misled they were often more passionate and diligent in their godly service (even though it was false) than many Catholics. Furthermore, the bad state of the Church and the behaviour of many clerics had pushed them into heresy and the fact that many members of the elite were in favour of Protestantism had also added to its attraction. The

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<sup>282</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 24 (IV); Lamont, *Het Wereldbeeld van Een Zestiende-Eeuwse Gentenaar Marcus van Vaernewijck*, 261–68.

<sup>283</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 311–312 (III). “dwelck tvolck niet gheerne en zach”.

<sup>284</sup> Van Bruaene, *De Gentse Memorieboeken Als Spiegel van Stedelijk Historisch Bewustzijn (14de Tot 16de Eeuw)*, 236. Here you find the example of criticism of the Catholic rhetorician Joos vander Stoct on the execution of a mother and daughter in 1564.

<sup>285</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 60 (I). “their tyranny over simple and innocent people who only wanted to leave the world in order to walk the narrow path as Christ had taught”.

<sup>286</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 311, 313 (III), 1, 2, 5–6, 15, 16–17, 18 (IV). “die aerme patienten”, Welck eenen weermoot dat haer overquam mach elck wel dijncken!”, “twaren sommighe Spaensche soldaten te Ghendt diet upghaven, die tjirannich van herten waren ende moghelic zulcke wreetheijt gheerne ghezien hadden”, “dwelc ghruwelic om zien was”, “dattet ghruwelic om horen es”.

<sup>287</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 15–16, 22 (IV). “Up den voornoemden dach werden te Ghendt (Ghode lof) zes mannen, die ter causen van tbreken ghevanghen waren, ontslegghen”.

<sup>288</sup> Lamont, *Het Wereldbeeld van Een Zestiende-Eeuwse Gentenaar Marcus van Vaernewijck*, 265–68.

Catholic priests had not focussed enough on teaching in the past years, whereas the Protestant preachers had often shown a lot of diligence in preaching. Van Vaernewijck wrote that apart from the 20 points he listed, there were many other reasons for showing compassion to the poor lost sinners, but that it would take him too long to elaborate.<sup>289</sup>

Van Vaernewijck's descriptions of the events that followed iconoclasm illustrate that he believed there were different degrees of sin or immorality and these did not necessarily coincide with the official (Roman Catholic) viewpoint. Although he was shocked by iconoclasm and opposed most Protestant ideas, Van Vaernewijck somehow continued to consider many of the iconoclasts or Protestants of Ghent as fellow citizens who had been misled but still had some good morals. When describing Lievin Henricx, for example, he mentioned his care of the poor and wrote that he lived honestly and feared God.<sup>290</sup> A fellow citizen who was accused of selling heretical books was, according to Van Vaernewijck, less guilty than his "orthodox" wife, who behaved herself "qualic" with the Spanish soldiers and accused her husband and others of heresy.<sup>291</sup> Guilt or innocence was not just determined by law and Catholic dogmas, but by a sense of morality that was visible on a more practical level and probably shared by the community. As a result, we do not find a black and white world in Van Vaernewijck's chronicle, but a coloured, nuanced picture. Overall, behaviour was more important than orthodoxy.

Another distinction he made had to do with responsibility. Van Vaernewijck was more harsh on people who he believed should have known better or who influenced others. Describing a certain priest, he wrote that he was "a small, short person who had wobbly legs, but who was even more wobbly in his faith as he subscribed to all of Luther's viewpoints and could not be persuaded to think differently". According to Van Vaernewijck, he died because he falsified God's word, just like a counterfeiter falsifies and counterfeits the royal coin. Van Vaernewijck's account highlighted the dichotomy between the seducers and the misled on other occasions too. He considered the first group to be the real criminals. He wrote that it would have been better if the new Protestant preachers had all been chopped up to make meat pies rather than being given the chance to mislead and corrupt so many souls that could no longer be won over to the

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<sup>289</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 26-27 (IV). "Maer wel es waer, groote compassie es daer mede te hebben, ten eersten, om dattet ons even christen meinschen zijn gheweest, uut eenen zaden des Evangeliums voortgecommen; ten anderen, om dat zij broosch zijn ende ghebreckelic, Adams kinderen, ghelijck wij alle..."

<sup>290</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 46-47 (I).

<sup>291</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 3 (IV). "diens vrouw die zich qualic regierde met de Spaengiaerden ende blameerde haren man, ghelijck snoode hoeren pleghen, zegghende jeghen hemlieden, dat hij een heretijck was, ende blameerder meer andere, die haer zelve te voren gheblameert hadden".

Catholic faith.<sup>292</sup> Compassion was the main emotion shown when talking about those who had been misled. He wrote it was “so sad and sorrowful that so many good honest men had to go and wander about and leave their homeland and town where they had been born”.<sup>293</sup>

The other citizens of Ghent also seemed to have subdivided the people sentenced into various moral categories. Many of the convicted were still considered to be members of the community and for some imprisoned men, missions were set up in order to try to free them. For example, Francis Heuriblock had been a prominent member of the Calvinist consistory, which had gathered regularly in his own house. He had been in charge of the construction of the Calvinist temple in Ghent, which he had also helped financially. Furthermore, he had helped his Calvinist daughter to flee to Wesel to join her husband. Although his brother Martin Heuriblock had been convicted and burned as a heretic 23 years earlier, Francis Heuriblock requested that the Duke of Alva free him, referring to the loyalty of his ancestors in their service to the king. He also argued that his parents and he himself had spent about 8000 ducats on the preservation of churches. Furthermore, he mentioned that he had played only a minimal role in the Troubles of 1566 and that, in the meantime, he had signed the act of repentance and had reconciled with the Catholic Church.<sup>294</sup> Indeed, his conversion to Calvinism had been very recent. In the weeks before iconoclasm, the magistrate had appointed him as a superintendent in the first quarter of the St Nicolas parish. At that time, he and four other men who were later identified as Calvinists had been trusted enough by the magistracy to be appointed to lead the local militia that was in charge of protecting the Church.<sup>295</sup> Interestingly, many prominent citizens and even clergymen became involved in the mission to save Heuriblock. Van Vaernewijck, who seemed convinced of his genuine remorse, described how these people drove up and down, day and night, in order to reduce the sentence; one of the clerics was a nephew of Heuriblock and a canon of St Donatian's in Bruges, while others included Lord Gillis Van Waesbeerghe, pastor of Gentbrugge, and two priests of St Nicholas's church in Ghent, who attested how he had saved many of the church's ornaments during iconoclasm. Even the famous Ghent Dominican and preacher Jan Vanderhaeghen

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<sup>292</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 17, 18 (IV). “Hij was ooc een cleen curt persoon, manck ghaende in zijn beenen ende int gheloove noch veel mancker, want hij sustineerde al Luthers opinien, daer hij niet af te brijnghen en was[...]. Hij starf om tvervalschen vanden woerde Godts, ghelijck een valsche muntenare sConincx munte conterfeijt ende corruppeert [...]. Wij mochten willen, dat die nieu predicanten in pasteije vleesch ghecapt hadden gheweest, dan dat zij zoo menighe ziele verleet ende bedorven hebben, die nemmermeer om winnen oft om bekeeren en zullen zijn.”

<sup>293</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 6-9 (II). “Zoo dat jammer ende compasselic was zoo vele ghoede eerlicke mannen te moeten naermaels ghaen dolen, ende uut haer vaderlandt ende stadt, daer zij gheboren waren, vluchten.”

<sup>294</sup> Verheyden, *Het Gentse Martyrologium (1530-1595)*, 1945:18-19.

<sup>295</sup> Scheerder, ‘Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567’, 37, 42.

travelled to Brussels to plea for Heuriblock's life.<sup>296</sup> Heuriblock's high social status and influential role in political and social networks would have strengthened the protests against his punishment, even more than his friendships and the feeling that his execution would hurt the community. But all to no avail.

The prosecutions weighed heavily on the city. Van Vaernewijck explained how much stress and grief the events after the Troubles caused the town and that day after day the only thing one heard was more bad news.<sup>297</sup> The sorrow of Ghent's citizens was primarily caused by the persecution and execution of (family) members of the community. Although iconoclasm might have deepened the divisions between friends and family members because of religious ideas, the society contained a large group for whom confessional divisions were not the decisive factor in co-existence. Political opinions and social relations and networks blurred the strict divisions between the members of the "new" or Reformed religion and Catholics. The appreciation of a moral life above theology and dogmas may also have formed a common ground where dissenters still had a place.

## 2.6 Dissidence and community

The descriptions of Van Vaernewijck of the few iconoclasts or convicted dissidents of St James prove that these men were strongly embedded in the social and religious fabric of Ghent. The churchwarden's accounts of St James mention other parishioners who were found guilty of *gheuserie*. Some are only briefly mentioned and for rather trivial matters. For example, in 1564-1565 St James's church paid the goldsmith Frederick de Buck 3 shillings 7 deniers for 200 bags of coal.<sup>298</sup> Jan Pyls and Lieven van der Vennen are mentioned as well.<sup>299</sup> These references in the accounts do add to the idea that before 1566 religious differences did not cause strong divisions in the parish community.

More interesting is the case of Marc de Mil, who had been a member of the Reformed consistory during the Wonder Year. In the years preceding 1566 he had held a rather prestigious position in the parish church. Although I found no proof that he was a churchwarden, in 1562-1563 he was trusted enough to be given responsibility, together with a few other men, for emptying the offertory.<sup>300</sup> The fact that his wife had a fixed paid

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<sup>296</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 15-16 (IV).

<sup>297</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 17, 18 (IV). "Alle daghe en hoorde men niet dan droufheijt ende zwaericheijt. [...]".

<sup>298</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 344, fo 17 vo.

<sup>299</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 344, fo 9 vo; no 347, fo 2 ro.

<sup>300</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 342, fo 9.



seat in the church is also an example of his prominent position in the church. According to the accounts, the seat was used from at least 1562 to 1567. Of course, it is possible that the accounts reflect the parish's financial position with a time delay and that the seat was only used until 1566. In the accounts of 1567-1568, the bookkeeper wrote that four seats had not been used. The seat of the wife of de Mil was one of them. From the accounts of 1567-1568 we know that he and his wife left Ghent.<sup>301</sup> de Mil's affiliation with Calvinism may have been very recent, taking place during the Wonder Year. It is also possible that de Mil had held Calvinist sympathies for a much longer time and simply hidden them. His position in the parish church would have been the perfect cover in the years that Protestantism was highly marginalized and persecuted. The Wonder Year might have given him the necessary push to make his confession public. Guido Marnef has observed that as the dangers of belonging to a Protestant church fell away during the Wonder Year in Antwerp, Valenciennes and Middelburg, the more wealthy and "respectable" sympathisers took the step of publicly confessing to being Protestants and becoming members of the Protestant church. Before 1566, the bulk of the membership had come from the less well-to-do. Thus in the years before 1566, the merchant de Mil might have been what was called a Nicodemite: a sympathiser of the Calvinist church, but unwilling to break with the Catholic Church as this would have threatened his social position.<sup>302</sup> It is not clear what the opinions of his wife were on religious matters.

We know of other women who chose or received the same fate as their husbands. Although the schoolteacher Jan Tayaert was not convicted by the Council of Troubles, in 1569 the bishop of Ghent, Cornelius Jansenius, forbade him to teach any longer. Tayaert had baptized one of his children in the Calvinist temple and both he and his wife had attended the hedge preaching.<sup>303</sup> Jan de Vos was not a parishioner of St James but it is interesting that in 1568 both he and his wife were officially banished by the Council of Troubles. This was quite rare. We do not have any further information on the wife's role in the Troubles. Van Vaernewijck describes Jan de Vos as a wealthy merchant who had been a member of the Calvinist consistory and the committee in charge of the construction of the temple. Furthermore, he had been present at the negotiations of the Reformed with the magistrate.<sup>304</sup>

More often, it seems that the wife or other family members of the convicted dissidents had different beliefs or at least publicly conformed to the Catholic Church. For example,

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<sup>301</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 342, 343, 344, 345, fo 6; no 346, fo 7 vo, 8 ro. The accounts covering the period 1565-1566 are missing.

<sup>302</sup> Marnef, *Antwerp in the Age of Reformation. Underground Protestantism in a Commercial Metropolis 1550-1577*, 97-98.

<sup>303</sup> Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 237.

<sup>304</sup> Scheerder, 'Documenten in verband met confiscatie van roerende goederen van hervormingsgezinden te Gent (1567-1568)', 129.

the wife of Pieter de Bellemakere was on the list of parishioners who in 1568 gave money to support the repairs of St James's church. She offered 14 deniers, which was a little less than the average amount given to this fund.<sup>305</sup> As most of Pieter de Bellemakere's goods would have been confiscated after he was banished, this is still a reasonable contribution. De Bellemakere's wife obviously did not join him in his banishment but stayed in Ghent. Her familial and social context would have played an important role in this decision. Most likely, she had children living in Ghent. Indeed, a certain Jan de Bellemakere, *filius* Pieter, was mentioned in the churchwarden's account of 1570-1571. The church was given 9 shillings for his funeral, during which the largest bells rang five *huerpoosen*.<sup>306</sup> This was a funeral that was traditionally only chosen by fairly wealthy Catholics who could afford it. Jan's father Pieter de Bellemakere had been a very wealthy man, so it would not have been odd for Jan, with support of his father, to gain a lot of wealth as well. This may explain why, when Pieter de Bellemakere was banished, his wife could stay; she could turn to family in Ghent for support. She may even have played a role in safeguarding property that would otherwise have been confiscated.<sup>307</sup>

In the accounts of 1600-1601, the wife, then widow of Pieter de Bellemakere, is recorded a last time, this time for her burial. She had her grave in the chapel of St Barbara in St James's church. The funeral expenses, totalling about 30 shillings, paid for the bell ringing (nine *pozen*), the sepulchre, the (best) cloth, etc. and again point to the funeral of a wealthy and prominent Catholic.<sup>308</sup> This burial was on the same prestigious level as that of her son Jan de Bellemakere. This case illustrates how people in one family could take (seemingly) opposite sides when it came to religion. We don't know if there was any contact between father and son or husband and wife, but clearly the rest of the community considered both Jan de Bellemakere and his mother to be normal wealthy Catholics and parishioners of St James.

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<sup>305</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 346.

<sup>306</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 348, fo 12 vo.

<sup>307</sup> Some doubts remain, however, about the exact identity of this Jan. A Jan de Bellemakere, without any reference to Pieter, is also mentioned before this funeral, for buying candles in the church. And in the accounting year of the funeral (1570-1571) and in 1572-1573, Jan de Bellemakere turns up as a sort of churchwarden of St James who helped to collect money. A last reference to Jan de Bellemakere is found in the accounts of 1574-1575, when his heirs pay 20 shillings for his grave in the church. As the grave of Jan de Bellemakere, *filius* Pieter, had not yet been mentioned, this is probably the same Jan for whom the bells rang in 1570. Furthermore, these funeral expenses also fit in with the burial of a wealthy, prominent Catholic. The references to Jan de Bellemakere in 1572 and 1573 may thus relate to another person with the same name, or refer to the same Jan who had collected money before his death, but had not yet been recorded in the accounts. See: RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 348, 349 fo 17 vo, no 351, fo 11 vo.

<sup>308</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 370, fo 30 vo, 31 ro, 32 ro.

The wife of Lievin Hendricx also contributed to the collection of alms, recorded in the churchwarden's accounts of 1568. She paid 2 shillings and 4 deniers. About 14 years later, in 1583-1585, she died a widow and in her will she left 2 pounds for the repairs of St James's church.<sup>309</sup> She was also buried in the church as a good Catholic.<sup>310</sup> A similar case might be made for the widow of Jan Rooze, who is mentioned in the accounts of 1566-1567. However, there are doubts as to whether this Jan Rooze is the same Jan Rooze who was hanged in 1568.<sup>311</sup> The wife of the banished merchant Lievin Tock also remained in Ghent after her husband fled.<sup>312</sup>

It is important not to assume that everyone who remained in Ghent was a devout Catholic. In fact, the most logical thing for people to do was to stay in the community where they had built up their lives. Leaving often meant losing their property, professions, family members and neighbours. Leaving was only a necessary step for those who feared for their lives or were banished. So at this stage, staying in Ghent was not a confessional choice but rather a practical choice, even though it required some accommodation towards the Catholic Church. The wife of Lieven Tock, for example, still had contact with her husband and tried to send him money. Even though the transaction did not succeed because it was stolen on the way, it reveals how having a spouse or family members in Ghent could aid those who had been banished.<sup>313</sup> Another reason for staying in Ghent was the hope that times would change and the men would shortly be able to return to Ghent.

Many women, especially the wives of iconoclasts, did not have much choice but to stay in Ghent. For many, the loss of a husband who was also the breadwinner led to great poverty. This problem became obvious shortly after iconoclasm. In October 1566, the wives of the arrested iconoclasts and those who had fled the town wrote a request to the magistrate and the governor of Flanders with the help of the Calvinist preachers Herman Moded and Pieter Carpentier and some prominent citizens. The request stated how many “women, some pregnant and sometimes having, six, eight or ten small children or a few

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<sup>309</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 357, fo 19.

<sup>310</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 357, fo 18 vo.

<sup>311</sup> As the convicted Jan Rooze we mentioned above was only executed in 1568, it would be strange if the accounts of 1567, even if they were written later, mentioned the burial of his widow. Furthermore, the description of Van Vaernewijck suggests Jan Rooze was an ordinary workman, not very wealthy or highly respected and with worn-out shoes. The funeral of the widow of Jan Rooze in 1566-1567, on the other hand, again indicates she was a wealthy parishioner. The costs for the sepulture in the church, the decorative coverings for the altars and the ringing of the church bells amounted to 38 shillings, so this was no ordinary funeral. See: Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 305 (III). and RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 345, fo 10 ro, vo.

<sup>312</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 272-279 (III).

<sup>313</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 272-279 (III).

less or more” were left in great financial difficulty because their husbands could not work for them.<sup>314</sup> It was not only the women who were to be pitied, as the letter also stressed the fact that these men had been forced to live in foreign communities, far from their homes, wives, children and fellow citizens. Furthermore, they used the argument that many image-breakers believed that iconoclasm had been demanded by the authorities. They pleaded for reconciliatory measures to ensure that these men could return and provide financial support for their families again. The magistracy took the request into account and decided that the imprisoned men and the fugitives would be allowed to make their requests individually, describing the reasons for and the circumstances of their role in iconoclasm.<sup>315</sup> It was quite a common practice for arrested men and women to write to the prince or bailiff to request a pardon. The style of the request written by the women of Ghent resembles these requests. Anke De Meyer, who studied the letters of late medieval and early modern men and women from Mechelen and Bruges, has detected recurring strategies and favourable constructions of the self that can also be found in the request of the women of Ghent. The role of married men as head and provider of the family was often an important element.<sup>316</sup>

For the governor Margaret of Parma, the request highlighted that the reactions of the Ghent magistracy were too slow. She urged them to convict and punish offenders as fast as possible. So it is unlikely that the request had any softening effect on the magistracy.<sup>317</sup>

Apart from the wives, other family members also remained in Ghent. In the St James parish, the blacksmith Jacob de Pruet had been banished, while his accomplice and son Jan, also a parishioner, had been forced to stay in Ghent. The churchwarden's accounts of St James make no mention of him, but in 1598 a blacksmith named Nicasius de Pruet was paid 9 shillings for repairing new locks and constructing a steal cross.<sup>318</sup> In addition, a blacksmith named Charles de Pruet was paid on several occasions for doing work on the church.<sup>319</sup> Since the name de Pruet was not common in Ghent, they were most likely sons of Jan de Pruet. The fact that Jan could not leave Ghent for a few years makes this even

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<sup>314</sup> City Archive Ghent (SAG), Reeks 94 bis, no 9, fo 131-133. “...huusvrouwen die zom zwaer zijn ende bevrucht van kinde, ende zom met zes acht ofte thien cleen kinderen ende eeneghe meer ende min. Al niet hebbende omme bij te levene dan zulcx als de manne met heurlieder neeringhe ende zueren aerbeyt winnen moghen, twelck hemlieden alnu(?) failliert bijden voornomden vanghene ende uutlantschede, zo dat de supplianten met huerlieder kinderkinz in grooter excessiver aermoede leven moeten”

<sup>315</sup> Scheerder, ‘Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567’, 118-19. SAG, Reeks 94 bis, no 9, fo 135-138.

<sup>316</sup> Anke De Meyer, “‘Tot Synder Goeden Fame Ende Name”. De “self-Fashioning” van Mechelse En Brugse Stedelingen in de Laatmiddeleeuwse En Vroegmoderne Genadebrieven’ (doctoral dissertation, Antwerp, Antwerp University, 2014), 23-27, 153, 177-78.

<sup>317</sup> Scheerder, ‘Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567’, 119-21.

<sup>318</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 368, fo 38 vo.

<sup>319</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 370, fo 42 vo; 378 fo 77 vo; 379 fo 79 vo; 382 fo 27 ro.

more plausible. A final rather remarkable finding in the churchwarden's accounts refers to the burial of the blacksmith Jacob de Pruet in 1597-1598. He was most likely buried in the graveyard as there is only mention of two torches being bought for this occasion (for 2 shillings).<sup>320</sup> This might have been Jan de Pruet's father, the iconoclast who had fled Ghent and had been banished by the Council of Troubles. He must have been between 70 and 80 years old at the time of the burial.<sup>321</sup> He could have returned to his family during the period of Calvinist rule, together with many other men, and reconciled with the Church in the years thereafter.<sup>322</sup>

The parishioner Jan Martins can also be found in the churchwarden's accounts. Although there were obviously several men with this name mentioned in the accounts, one reference points very strongly to the Jan Martins who was the second-hand clothes dealer and had removed statues from the guild's chapel and set them on fire in front of his house. Van Vaernewijck revealed that he had been imprisoned, but we do not know for how long. In the accounts of 1586-1587, thus 20 years after iconoclasm, a certain Jan Martins, juror of the guild of second-hand clothes dealers, is mentioned as having paid 25 shillings to the churchwardens for new floor tiles for the guild's chapel.<sup>323</sup> In 1566, Jan Martins was a journeyman of this guild. The next logical step was becoming a master in his guild, which he succeeded in doing. The fact that this Jan Martins was already a master makes it rather unlikely that he was the son of the Jan Martins who was a journeyman in 1566, although it is not impossible.<sup>324</sup> His deed as a (representative) benefactor for the guild's chapel in his parish church stands in stark contrast with his destructive actions as a young man 20 years earlier. His function in the guild and role in the transaction confirm

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<sup>320</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 366, fo 36 ro.

<sup>321</sup> De Pruet was described as being a big strong man at the time of the image-breaking. When he was about to be arrested he left his house in Onderstraat and climbed over the roofs of the houses to the Vrijdagmarkt and then fled. This leads me to estimate that he was 40 to 50 years old at most at the time he fled. Furthermore, he had a son who was still living with him and who had followed his lead in the image-breaking, and was considered old enough to be arrested. In 1566, Jacob de Pruet must thus have been between 35 and 50 years old.

<sup>322</sup> For more about reconciliation after iconoclasm see: Violet Soen, *Geen Pardon Zonder Paus! Studie over de Complementariteit van Het Koninkrijk En Pauseijk Generaal Pardon (1570-1584) En over Inquisiteur-Generaal Michael Baius (1560-1576)* (Brussels: Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België voor Wetenschappen en Kunsten, 2007); Soen, 'De Reconciliatie van "Ketters" in de Zestiende-Eeuwse Nederlanden (1520-1590)'; Spicer, 'After Iconoclasm: Reconciliation and Resacralisation in the Southern Netherlands, c. 1566-1585'.

<sup>323</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 359, fo 21 ro.

<sup>324</sup> Dambruyn, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 44, 180-87, 333. The guild of second-hand clothes dealers was a large guild with between 100 and 200 guild masters. Before becoming a journeyman, apprentices were taught the skills of their craft. An apprenticeship with a second-hand clothes dealer took three years. Before someone could become a master, he had to work at least one year in the service of a master. As masters were also required to have other qualifications and financial means, some journeymen remained journeymen their entire lives. Nevertheless, in the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, social mobility in the Ghent guilds was quite high.

his stable position in the parish and corporate life and his identity as a Catholic. His complicated past does not seem to have affected his position in the parish in 1586.

The parishioners discussed above are only a fraction of those who were in one way or another involved in iconoclasm, the hedge preaching and Reformed ideas. Of course, not everyone who had played a role in iconoclasm or had attended the hedge preaching was punished or put to death. This fact also contributed to the necessity of a certain tolerance in Ghent, as many citizens had a compromised past.<sup>325</sup> A policy that was too repressive would have brought destruction to the existing social fabric of Ghent. As a result, a lot of effort went into reconciliation. In March 1568, many people of Ghent were rehabilitated after paying a fine that would go to repairing the churches. A month later, children baptized in the Calvinist way could, together with their parents, reconcile with the Catholic Church. Apart from paying a fine, they had to light a torch in their church for the Holy Sacrament.<sup>326</sup> After this, both the ecclesiastical and secular governments offered ways to be pardoned. A first general pardon was announced by the Duke of Alva in 1570. This royal pardon was also supported by the pope, which meant that ecclesiastical rules had to be met in order to receive the pardon. So both political and religious dissenters had to reconcile with the Church in order to be officially pardoned. Between 1570 and 1574 at least two other general pardons would be proclaimed. These were also affirmed by the pope.<sup>327</sup> The first general pardon of 1570 was rather limited. The Ghent chronicler Van Campene explained that “from this pardon all heretics, consistoriants, banished and fugitives were excluded, as well as all those who refused to follow the laws of the Catholic Church”.<sup>328</sup> The pardon was officially announced by the Ghent bishop in July and the people were informed of it in August by their parish priest in the individual parish

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<sup>325</sup> Of course, tolerance is a broad concept and we should not make the mistake of interpreting it according to its contemporary meaning. For example, tolerance was never a goal, but at most a means. For more discussion on this subject, see: Benjamin J. Kaplan, “‘Dutch’ Religious Tolerance: Celebration and Revision”, in *Calvinism and Religious Toleration in the Dutch Golden Age*, ed. R. Po-Chia Hsia and Henk van Nierop (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 8–26; Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, ‘A Breakdown of Civic Community? Civic Traditions, Voluntary Associations and the Ghent Calvinist Regime (1577–84)’, in *Sociability and Its Discontents. Civil Society, Social Capital, and Their Alternatives in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Nicholas Eckstein and Nicholas Terpstra, Early European Research (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 275–76.

<sup>326</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566–1568*, 12 (IV).

<sup>327</sup> Soen, ‘De Reconciliatie van “Ketters” in de Zestiende-Eeuwse Nederlanden (1520–1590)’, 362; Violet Soen, ‘La Réitération de Pardons Collectifs à Finalités Politiques Pendant La Révolte Des Pays-Bas (1565–1598)’, in *Actes de La Journée d’études de Louvain-La-Neuve* (‘Préférant miséricorde à rigueur de justice’. Pratiques de la grâce (XIIIe–XVIIe siècles), Louvain-la-Neuve: Presses Universitaires de Louvain, 2007), 100.

<sup>328</sup> Van Campene, *Dagboek van Cornelis En Philip van Campene Behelzende Het Verhaal Der Merkwaaardigste Gebeurtenissen Voorgevallen Te Gent, Sedert Het Begin Der Godsdienstberoerten Tot Den 15e April 1571*, 266–67. “Uut dese pardoeninghe zijn ghesloten alle ketters, schismatiquen, consistorianten, ghebannen ende fugitiven, ende ooc de ghone, die nu voortan hem lieden niet en willen reguleren naer de ordonnantie vande catholijcke kercken.”

churches of Ghent. This act proves that the parish church was regarded as an important forum for reaching citizens. The authorities thus treated the parishes as separate communities in which the church took the central role. The pardon was not unconditionnel. It was made clear that even those who had attended the hedge preaching only once had to seek reconciliation. Those who refused faced physical and financial punishment. Philips Van Campene explained how those who obeyed the ordinance and went through the process of reconciliation received a letter in Latin, signed and sealed by a notary, that stated that the person had reconciled with the Catholic Church. In order to be accepted, Van Campene wrote, they had to give 7 deniers and do penance. For some people this penance consisted of going on Sunday mornings to attend the sermon and high mass, while others had to attend the mass of the Blessed Sacrament for three to four Thursdays.<sup>329</sup>

As seen above, the pardon of 1570 was rather limited and therefore it received a lot of criticism. With Alva's repression still vivid in people's minds, many regarded the pardon as just another aspect of the Spanish Inquisition. Still, the results were impressive. The diocese of Malines had 10,906 reconciliations, the bishop of Antwerp spoke of more than 17,000 pardons in Antwerp and its surroundings. In the diocese of s'Hertogenbosch 6000 people reconciled with the Catholic Church, while the archdiocese of Tournai recorded 28,385 reconciliations. Unfortunately, we do not have the figures for Ghent, but Jansenius had clearly tried to get most of the people who had been involved in iconoclasm or Calvinism to reconcile. Only a minority of those who reconciled had had heretical ideas; most had only attended the Protestant preaching. In 1572, the pardon was expanded for another three months, but little is known about who made use of it. Obviously it was not considered sufficient as the more serious offenders had not been able to use the pardon. A third pardon promulgated in 1574 under Luis de Requesens was broader than the one under Alva, as it enabled, for example, those banished by the court to return to their towns and reclaim their confiscated goods. Despite this more extensive offer, the number of reconciliations was much lower than in 1570. The church, which had hoped for unity, still found it was not inclusive enough.<sup>330</sup>

These attempts to bring people back to the Catholic Church and even convert those who had Protestant sympathies were as much part of official policy as the repressive measures witnessed by the Netherlands in the aftermath of iconoclasm. However, it was

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<sup>329</sup> Van Campene, 269, 278–79, 320.

<sup>330</sup> Soen, 'De Reconciliatie van "Ketters" in de Zestiende-Eeuwse Nederlanden (1520-1590)', 351–53; Soen, 'La Réitération de Pardons Collectifs à Finalités Politiques Pendant La Révolte Des Pays-Bas (1565-1598)', 110–11; Soen, *Geen Pardon Zonder Paus! Studie over de Complementariteit van Het Koninkrijk En Pauselijk Generaal Pardon (1570-1584) En over Inquisiteur-Generaal Michael Baius (1560-1576)*, 216–21; Lockefeet and de Kort, *Cornelius Jansenius van Hulst 1510-1576*, 128–30.

obvious that the latter tactics had had a strong polarizing effect within communities, in the sense that ordinary citizens felt repulsed by the harshness of Alva's policy and the Spanish soldiers. The offer of reconciliation was an attempt to prevent more people becoming alienated and to present ways to bring them back into the arms of the Church and central government. Furthermore, efforts to convert heretics and wrongdoers were part of a long tradition of the Church.<sup>331</sup> After the Wonder Year, rigorous repression became impossible as it would have meant the loss of the majority of the population. Too many people had been involved, one way or another, in Protestantism.<sup>332</sup> Again, a certain degree of tolerance was necessary to enable community life to carry on functioning. The Catholic Church and the secular authorities understood this.

## 2.7 Comparison and concluding remarks

The historiography on the iconoclasm of 1566 and the Wonderyear has illustrated its importance as a turning point in the political history of the Low Countries. Other studies have stressed the violence and the destructions of the rioters, the increased spread of the Reformed religion during the Wonderyear or the severe punishments for all kinds of dissidence that followed with the coming of Alva to the Netherlands. This chapter has focussed on the community of Ghent and illustrated the importance of civic peace as a shared value in times of religious and political strife.

Political confusion had a role in the societal dynamics as well. The confusion during the Wonderyear in Ghent led to a limited form of religious co-existence in Ghent. Certain demands for restraint in the persecution of heretics had permeated the various political levels of the government and became more or less official during this period.<sup>333</sup> But already before the semi-official acceptance of hedge preaching by the higher authorities, people with very different opinions on religious and theological matters had lived together in Ghent. From a Catholic viewpoint accepting heresy in the town or in a country was a great danger that would destabilize society. However, in practice more overarching values than doctrine seemed of importance for the continuation of civic life in Ghent. Loyalty to the community and care for the poor, for example, were regarded highly. The

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<sup>331</sup> Soen, 'De Reconciliatie van "Ketters" in de Zestiende-Eeuwse Nederlanden (1520-1590)', 339; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635*.

<sup>332</sup> Soen, 'De Reconciliatie van "Ketters" in de Zestiende-Eeuwse Nederlanden (1520-1590)', 349-50.

<sup>333</sup> Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation in France and the Netherlands: Clerical Leadership and Catholic Violence 1560-1585', 89. In the Netherlands this tolerance more or less entered politics from the bottom up.



line between what was heresy and what was not, was sometimes blurry. Anti-clericalism was widespread, and among traditional Christians in the Netherlands it was common to criticize abuses within the church. This made that reformed ideas were not as novel or shocking to Catholics as one might think. Because criticism was already part of the local Catholic tradition, the reformed ideas did not immediately polarize the people of Ghent, but simply added more options to the already colorful variety of religious practices.<sup>334</sup>

Of course, iconoclasm came as an enormous shock for the Catholic community. But as members of the Reformed Church tried to distance themselves of these destructions, those guilty of iconoclasm were treated differently from those who had dissident religious opinions. More often iconoclasts were described as outsiders of the community which helped to put the minds at rest as this meant the danger did not come from within. It felt just that the destructive acts of marginal vandals had to be punished. The repression of people only because of their (heretical) ideas was another story. Although heresy was considered a problem, it was according to De Boer, not understood as an voluntarily attack. Furthermore, most people of Ghent had neighbours or family members who were attracted in some degree to the Reformed ideas. This made it emotionally harder for ordinary Catholics to support suppression of heresy. Furthermore persecution would break apart their community and familial ties more abruptly than the ideological differences seemed to do. Another factor that furthered a practical form of tolerance and stopped polarization between Catholics and Reform minded in Ghent was the policy of Alva. His uncompromising posture, the harsh treatment of dissidents judged by the Council of Blood and the annoying presence of Spanish soldiers were the cause of the Spanish yoke becoming the common enemy of most citizens of Ghent.<sup>335</sup>

The people of Ghent clearly had strong convictions about civic peace and about religion which they intended to follow even if the authorities gave different orders. The fact that their convictions seem to us un-confessional, ambiguous and even fluid, in the light of what happened later, does not mean that they were not strongly held opinions that actively guided the decisions of the men and women of Ghent. The composure of the citizens of Ghent in the 1560's were in fact in line with Ghent's rebellious past that was marked by many revolts against its sovereign prince. It was considered virtuous for the inhabitants of the Low Countries to revolt against the magistracy when they considered its policy corrupt. Passive obedience to contested local regulations was thus not the rule

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<sup>334</sup> This does not mean that there were no incidents between Protestants and Catholics during the Wonderyear. Marnef has shown with the case of Antwerp that Catholics did take actions against the spread of Protestantism: Marnef, 'Multiconfessionalism in a Commercial Metropolis: The Case of 16th-Century Antwerp', 78–80.

<sup>335</sup> Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635*, 89–90.

in Ghent.<sup>336</sup> The rejection of a majority to defend the churches against iconoclasts or denounce heretical neighbours was an active choice. As long as the political context allowed for it, these local perspectives on community enabled to a certain extent religious co-existence.

The lack of a principled or legal basis for tolerance was the weakness of the relative freedom that dissidents enjoyed during the Wonderyear. The legal basis had started to fall away by the end of 1566. In the beginning of 1567, also the Ghent citizenry was put under pressure to officially align with the Catholic Church and the Law. Pragmatism seemed to be the most important motivation for the majority that yielded to these demands.

Ghent was not totally unique, but in other places in the Low countries other motivations and dynamics influenced the room for religious dissidents and the viewpoint of citizens on their community. Antwerp stood out in the Netherlands for the presence of large groups of religious dissidents. This was a direct result of Antwerp's position as most important harbour and economic centre in Western Europe. Merchants from all over the world set foot here. The magistracy of Antwerp made active efforts to limit the persecution of Calvinists and Lutherans in order to not hinder trade. Also the growing middle group that had ideas that fluctuated between Catholicism and Protestantism pushed the city towards a more open policy. Marnef, who focussed in his study mainly on the political achievements, has argued that also here, the Wonderyear became an experiment of religious co-existence. However, on the local field he saw mainly an increase of tension. In fact, he claims that it were mainly the antagonisms between the various religions that impeded the multi-confessional try-out. Although, there were also in Ghent unfriendly encounters and clashes between Catholics and Reformed - as we will discuss further in this thesis- there seems to have been less polarization among the Ghent citizenry.<sup>337</sup>

In Lille, the reaction to the spread of the Reformation and the coming of iconoclasm was very different from Anwerp and Ghent. Lille had been relatively early, in the 1550's, a centre for Calvinism. The famous preacher Guy de Brès boasted about the boldness with which could be preached in Lille. He also tried to set up a Reformed hierarchy in Lille and preached the Calvinist faith in other cities as well. By 1561, Protestant preachings were extremely popular and attracted up to one thousand listeners. But as Protestantism became more popular especially in neighbouring textile villages where up to one third of the population was said to be Protestant, the Lille magistracy, fearing social and political

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<sup>336</sup> Van Bruaene, 'A Breakdown of Civic Community? Civic Traditions, Voluntary Associations and the Ghent Calvinist Regime (1577-84)', 276; Boone and Prak, 'Rulers, Patricians, and Burghers: The Great and the Little Traditions of Urban Revolt in the Low Countries'.

<sup>337</sup> Marnef, 'Multiconfessionalism in a Commercial Metropolis: The Case of 16th-Century Antwerp', 77-80.

troubles in their city, took more measures against the spread of heresy. When the news of iconoclastic riots reached Lille in the summer of 1566, the magistrate immediately took precautions and was able to prevent destructions within the city walls. Even though there were sympathisants of the Reformed religion and iconoclasm in Lille, something the aldermen were very aware of, Lille presented itself as an orthodox Catholic town. Some of its citizens even attacked an individual man who they believed to be an iconoclast and brought him to the provincial governor begging him to execute justice. As there was no proof of this, he was set free. These actions don't just reveal the state of alarm among the population, but also a sense of conviction and value of community that was more clearly linked with Catholicism than it was in Ghent.<sup>338</sup>

Lille's position thus resembled more places in France where violence between the adherents of the different confessions was very common. In Antwerp, Ghent and other areas in the Netherlands were not as high. Pollmann has explained this by pointing to the difference in attitudes of the clergy.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> Duplessis, *Lille and the Dutch Revolt. Urban Stability in an Era of Revolution 1500-1582*, 175–83, 212–19.

<sup>339</sup> Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation in France and the Netherlands: Clerical Leadership and Catholic Violence 1560-1585', 83–88, 117–20. France is an exception. In the sixteenth century biconfessional cities could be found in Germany, Poland, Bohemia and Moravia. The role of the clergy in Ghent will be discussed in the following chapters.



## Chapter 3

### Financing the repairs after 1566 and 1584

The symbolic and social meaning and consequences of iconoclasm have been discussed in the previous chapter. In this and the following chapter, the focus turns to the material and financial aspects of the destruction and repairs in St James's church, relating not only to the iconoclasm of 1566, but also to the neglect and iconoclastic destruction committed during the Calvinist Republic (1577-1584). However, this is not an art-historical study. This chapter will use the analysis of the financing of the repairs to St James's church to achieve a broader understanding of the social and religious aspects of Catholic life in this period. Furthermore it will gain a deeper insight into the resilience of the urban parish and the engagement of parishioners with their church after these periods of crisis. The question of to what extent parishioners felt attached to their church is also related to – but not solely determined by – their interest in Catholicism. Indirectly this chapter examines the role of ordinary parishioners in early modern Catholicism.

If we only look at how the institutions evolved in different localities, this shows that most areas of the southern Low Countries did not enact the official ordinances and decrees of Trent. For Ghent, I have already illustrated the slow ecclesiastical recovery and appointment of the first bishop. And even with a Tridentine-inspired bishop like Jansenius, the Tridentine decrees were not published in Ghent until 1570. Many other cities in the Low Countries were quicker to react. For example, Ypres published the decrees in 1564, and Bruges and Malines in 1565.<sup>340</sup> Antwerp was also late in promulgating the decrees, as the diocese of Antwerp only received its bishop in 1570.<sup>341</sup> Furthermore,

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<sup>340</sup> R. Weemaes, *Visitatieverslagen van Karel Maes, Bisschop van Gent Diarium Mei-Juni 1611* (Brussels: Koninklijke Commissie voor Geschiedenis, 1987), VI.

<sup>341</sup> Willocx, *L'introduction Des Décrets Du Concile de Trente Dans Les Pays-Bas et Dans La Principauté de Liège*, 263; M.G. Spiertz, 'Succes en falen van de katholieke reformatie', in *Ketters en papen onder Filips II* (Utrecht: Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent, 1986), 61; Marnef, 'Een Nieuw Bisdome in Troebele Tijden. Vanaf de Oprichting Tot Het Episcopaat van Willem van Bergen', 40–42. The fear was that the bishop's increased control over religious life would bring the Inquisition and harm the city's economic activities.

implementing the decrees was not an easy process. These negative aspects of late 16<sup>th</sup>- and early 17<sup>th</sup>-century Catholicism have been highlighted in the historiography from the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since the 1970s, Michel Cloet, church historian at the Catholic University of Louvain, has in particular produced many studies on the subject of early modern Catholicism in Flanders. He argues that the implementation of the reforms in daily life only got under way in the first decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The important factors in the adoption of Tridentine Catholicism and the spread of Counter-Reformation Catholicism, he states, were: the rule of the archdukes Albert and Isabella (1598-1621), the acts of archbishop Matthias Hovius, the third provincial council of Malines (1607) and the start of the Twelve Years' Truce (1609-1621).<sup>342</sup> But even then, his study of bishop Triest showed that throughout most of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the behaviour of Ghent's citizens did not come up to Tridentine standards. His conclusions are the result of research that was primarily based on visitation reports and the recorded acts of the Ghent bishops. This top-down approach to Catholicism, which was followed by many other historians in this period, led to a rather negative assessment of religious life in the decades following the closure of the Council of Trent.<sup>343</sup>

In 1961, before Cloet had finished his own doctoral thesis on church life in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Tielt,<sup>344</sup> J. De Brouwer published a work on religious life in the county of Aalst. He had used a similar approach. De Brouwer was convinced that the Council of Trent was the right remedy for overcoming “the problems” of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Christianity. The zealous bishops and the archdukes Albert and Isabella were praised for their direct support of the Catholic cause, but De Brouwer's detailed study showed that few parishes of the County of Aalst saw the council's decrees put into practice before 1600. For certain aspects, such as the catechism for children and the obligation of residence for priests, the first quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century too showed little improvement.<sup>345</sup> Leo Braeken, who studied the deanery of Herentals in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, stressed the role of the archdukes in the restoration of the churches in this deanery, finding proof of their role in the visitation reports of Herentals. Thus he situated the start of some progress in the Catholic reforms

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<sup>342</sup> Michel Cloet, ‘Het Doopsel in de Nieuwe Tijd (ca. 1550-ca. 1800)’, in *Geboorte En Doopsel*, ed. L. Leijssen, Michel Cloet, and Karel Dobbelaere, Kadoc Studies 20 (Louvain: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 1996), 75; Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety. Archduke Albert (1598-1621) and Habsburg Political Culture in an Age of Religious Wars*.

<sup>343</sup> Bauwens, ‘Parish Studies and the Debates on Religious Life in the Low Countries (Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period)’; Bauwens, ‘Restoration and Reform of the Parish after Trent. The Case of St James in Ghent (1561-1630)’, 2017.

<sup>344</sup> Cloet, *Het Kerkelijk Leven in Een Landelijke Dekenij van Vlaanderen Tijdens de XVIIe Eeuw: Tielt van 1609 Tot 1700*.

<sup>345</sup> J. De Brouwer, *Godsdienstig leven en kerkelijke instellingen 1550-1621. Land van Aalst* (Aalst: De aankondiger, 1961), 9, 16, 68, 74, 98, 185; A. Pasture, *La Restauration Religieuse Aux Pays-Bas Catholiques Sous Les Archiducs Albert et Isabelle (1596-1633)*, Recueil de Travaux Publiés Par Les Membres Des Conférences d'histoire et de Philologie 2 (Louvain: Louvain Librairie Universitaire, 1925).

in the second decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>346</sup> Many studies have attempted to explain the slow implementation process of the renewed Catholic programme. In their studies from the late 1980s, M. G. Spiertz and Marc Therry placed part of the blame for the perceived slow recovery of Catholic life on the obstruction of secular authorities and on the general religious and political troubles at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was only during the Twelve Years' Truce that most of the restoration work on the churches, destroyed during iconoclasm in 1566 and the Calvinist republics (+1578-1585), could take place. Furthermore, Spiertz argued that the late medieval church had lacked a well-organized parish system. The parish had failed to function as a community because of the divisions created by confraternities and guilds, which pursued their own group interests.<sup>347</sup>

The use of contemporary standards to judge the past is evident in many of these local studies. Spiertz and Braeken did not shy away from almost personal criticism of early modern Catholic institutions.<sup>348</sup> Furthermore, although these researchers understood that the visitation records were limited and did not tell the whole story, they nevertheless used them to evaluate Christian life. A top-down perspective thus dominated the discourse. Therry did attempt to include the agency of ordinary believers in his study by arguing that ecclesiastical hierarchy also benefited from traditional piety, as it supported the purer spirituality that the Catholic Reformation wanted to bring about. Overall, however, he assessed the role of the laity negatively.<sup>349</sup> It should come as no surprise that

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<sup>346</sup> Braeken, *De dekenij Herentals (1603-1669). Bijdrage tot de studie van het godsdienstig leven in het bisdom Antwerpen*, 84-89, 97-100.

<sup>347</sup> De Brouwer, *Godsdienstig leven en kerkelijke instellingen 1550-1621. Land van Aalst*, 185; Spiertz, 'Succes en falen van de katholieke reformatie', 61-71; Marc Therry, *De religieuze beleving bij de leken in het 17e-eeuwse bisdom Brugge (1609-1706)*, vol. 128, *Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse der letteren* (Brussel: Koninklijke academie voor wetenschappen, letteren en schone kunsten van België, 1988), 98; A similar idea, but formulated in a more neutral way, can be found in a recent study of Paul Trio, 'Lay Persons in Power: The Crumbling of the Clerical Monopoly on Urban Devotion in Flanders, as a Result of the Rise of Lay Confraternities in Europe and the Americas', in *Early Modern Confraternities in Europe and the Americas: International and Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Christopher Black and Pamela Gravestock (Aldershot, Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2006); and in Marjan De Smet, Paul Trio, and Johannes Antonius Eligius Kuys, *Processions and Church Fabrics in the Low Countries during the Middle Ages. An Inquiry into Secular Influence on Ecclesiastical and Religious Matters on a Local Urban Level* (Leuven: Faculty of Arts, Catholic University of Leuven, 2006).

<sup>348</sup> Spiertz, 'Succes en falen van de katholieke reformatie', 68; Braeken, *De dekenij Herentals (1603-1669). Bijdrage tot de studie van het godsdienstig leven in het bisdom Antwerpen*, 129.

<sup>349</sup> Therry, *De religieuze beleving bij de leken in het 17e-eeuwse bisdom Brugge (1609-1706)*, 128, 133, 189; Braeken, *De dekenij Herentals (1603-1669). Bijdrage tot de studie van het godsdienstig leven in het bisdom Antwerpen*, 136, 210-12; De Brouwer, *Godsdienstig leven en kerkelijke instellingen 1550-1621. Land van Aalst*, 100, 168, 241.

Cloet, summarizing these studies in 1988, concluded that ordinary people as a whole showed little interest in Catholicism before the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>350</sup>

In the last decades more attention has been focused on the bottom-up processes that (re)formed Catholicism. This has also been visible in international research. Mark Forster's study of southwest Germany, *Catholic Revival in the Age of the Baroque. Religious Identity in Southwest Germany, 1550-1750*, convincingly describes the active role of ordinary Catholics in the formation of the Catholic confession in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He argues that as villagers and townspeople identified themselves with the practices of what he calls "Baroque Catholicism", they developed a Catholic confessional identity. Because of this role of the population, Forster concludes that Catholicism could vary, depending on the locality and region.<sup>351</sup> In 1999 Robert Bireley's *The Refashioning of Catholicism, 1450-1700* highlighted the multi-layered structure of Catholicism. In the early modern period, Catholicism was not only shaped by ecclesiastical reforms and religious concerns, but also by the response of Catholics to the major political, social, economic and cultural changes in society. Bireley illustrated how the laity had been an important agent of change. Many people had shown a desire for a more profound religiosity. Popular devotions with medieval roots remained a central aspect of Catholicism until well into the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, ecclesiastical expansion, such as the founding of new religious orders, were often initiated by wealthy lay families.<sup>352</sup> Although his focus was not on the Counter-Reformation, Eamon Duffy's analysis of "traditional religion" during the Late Middle Ages and early modern period in England (first edition 1992) rejected the division between elite or clerical culture versus common or lay culture. Both groups played an essential part in liturgy and popular devotions. Duffy illustrated how many of the laity had a strong desire

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<sup>350</sup> Michel Cloet, 'Algemeen verslag over de kerkgeschiedschrijving betreffende de nieuwe tijd sinds 1970', in *Godsdienst, mentaliteit en dagelijks leven. Religieuze geschiedenis in België sinds 1970*, ed. Michel Cloet and F. Daelemans, Archief- en bibliotheekwezen in België (Brussels: Archief- en Bibliotheekwezen in België, 1988), 71–74; Braeken, *De dekenij Herentals (1603-1669). Bijdrage tot de studie van het godsdienstig leven in het bisdom Antwerpen*, 162; Bauwens, 'Parish Studies and the Debates on Religious Life in the Low Countries (Late Middle Ages and Early Modern Period)', 67–68.

<sup>351</sup> Marc R. Forster, *Catholic Revival in the Age of the Baroque. Religious Identity in Southwest Germany, 1550-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 3–9; Marc R. Forster, 'The Thirty Years' War and the Failure of Catholicization', in *The Counter-Reformation*, ed. David M. Luebke, Blackwell Essential Readings in History (Malden, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 163–98; Bauwens, 'Restoration and Reform of the Parish after Trent. The Case of St James in Ghent (1561-1630)', 2017.

<sup>352</sup> Robert Bireley, *The Refashioning of Catholicism, 1450-1700: A Reassessment of the Counter Reformation* (Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 19, 201–4; Dinot-Lecomte Marie-Claude, 'L'expansion Des Couvents et Des Fondations Charitables Dans La Première Moitié Du XVIIe Siècle. Exemples d'Amiens, d'Arras et de Douai', in *Les 'Trente Glorieuses' (circa 1600-circa 1630) Pays-Bas Méridionaux et France Septentrionale. Aspects Économiques, Sociaux et Religieux Au Temps Des Archiducs Albert et Isabelle*, ed. C. Bruneel et al. (Brussels, 2010), 89, 95, 96.



for liturgical diversity.<sup>353</sup> Moreover, already before Duffy, John Bossy's *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700* had managed to turn the central focus of a study of religion to the common people.<sup>354</sup>

The historiography on the Low Countries also underwent this shift. Marie Juliette Marinus's 1995 study of Antwerp has directed attention to the bottom-up Catholic Reformation. She shows that in the period 1585-1676, local devotions in Antwerp could go against or coincide with Tridentine Catholicism.<sup>355</sup> Judith Pollmann has been able to illustrate the strong involvement of many Catholics in the Low Countries in religion, especially after 1585, when the Calvinist regimes ended. She claims Catholics in the Southern Netherlands took a more aggressive stance towards Protestantism than before the Calvinist republics.<sup>356</sup> Geert Janssen sees similar tendencies and finds a possible explanation for this strengthened and "reformed" Catholicism in the returning Catholic refugees, who had become radicalized during their stay in Catholic refugee centres such as Cologne.<sup>357</sup> Various local studies, usually focussing on the 17th century, have illustrated how vibrant some Catholic communities were.<sup>358</sup>

Some of these studies have received critique as well. French pointed out how Duffy's image of the parish was too static and lacked variety. She argued that he failed to take into account the socio-economic, political and legal factors as well as the conflicts that set each community apart and influenced the formation of a communal identity.<sup>359</sup> Jeffrey Muller and Xander van Eck question the recent overly strong focus on the agency of (ordinary Catholics). They state that the various Catholic actions were guided by an

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<sup>353</sup> Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580*.

<sup>354</sup> Bossy, *Christianity in the West. 1400-1700*.

<sup>355</sup> Marinus, *De Contrareformatie te Antwerpen (1585-1676)*, 155:246-58. Despite the attention paid to the reactions of parishioners and dissidents, the study takes a rather top-down approach.

<sup>356</sup> Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635*.

<sup>357</sup> Geert H. Janssen, 'The Exile Experience', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to the Counter-Reformation*, ed. Alexandra Bamji, Geert H. Janssen, and Mary Laven (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2013), 73-90; Geert H. Janssen, 'The Counter-Reformation of the Refugee: Exile and the Shaping of Catholic Militancy in the Dutch Revolt', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 63/4 (October 2012): 671-92; Bauwens, 'Restoration and Reform of the Parish after Trent. The Case of St James in Ghent (1561-1630)', 2017.

<sup>358</sup> For an interesting study on music in Counter-Reformation Antwerp, see Stefanie Beghein, 'Kerkmuziek, Consumptie En Confessionalisering: Het Muziekleven Aan Antwerpse Parochiekerken, C. 1585-1797' (Antwerp: Antwerp University, 2014), 186-87; More general works on the topic are: Claude Bruneel and Philippe Guignet, 'Conclusion', in *Les 'Trente Glorieuses' (circa 1600-circa 1630) Pays-Bas Méridionaux et France Septentrionale. Aspects Économiques, Sociaux et Religieux Au Temps Des Archiducs Albert et Isabelle*, ed. C. Bruneel et al. (Bruxelles: Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique, 2010), 413-26; Alain Lottin, *Lille, Citadelle de La Contre-Réforme? (1598-1668)*, Histoire et Civilisations (Dunkerque: Presses Universitaires de Septentrion, 2013).

<sup>359</sup> Katherine French, 'Competing for Space: Medieval Religious Conflict in the Monastic-Parochial Church at Dunster', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 27, no. 2 (1997): 231-38.

existing frame of symbols shared by the community and imposed top-down by the Habsburg and ecclesiastical authorities.<sup>360</sup>

However, the early modern Catholic Church was far from unified. Massimo Firpo's research has found that the Church was extremely divided in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and even later. He is convinced, for example, that in its attempts to fight the heretical enemy, the Holy Office also opposed Catholic reforms initiated by other institutions, including the Council of Trent. Although Firpo believes that the Counter-Reformation of the Holy Office would come to dominate the official policy of the Catholic Church in the long run, he acknowledges that the outcome of these institutional conflicts also depended on the local context.<sup>361</sup> Again, the study of local factors seems indispensable to the understanding of Catholicism. The challenge remains to take into account and untangle the complex processes of negotiation and conflict between the various agents of Catholic change, while simultaneously examining the socio-economic and political influences at play in each context.

Therefore, not only does the case study of St James add a new geographical perspective to the existing bottom-up historical studies, but it also reframes the question of religion and Catholic reformation against the setting of broader urban and religious attitudes. As in the previous chapter, the attitudes of Catholics are investigated for the period before 1585 and the period following the Calvinist Republic in Ghent. The focus is on those Catholics who remained in their hometown during and after the Troubles, rather than on those who fled. A comparison of the two consecutive periods during which destruction and then church repairs took place (after 1566 and after 1584), reveals a shift in the attitude of the parishioners towards the Church. This change in attitude towards the church building and interior largely fits in with the totality of practices labelled as Counter-Reformation or Tridentine Catholicism. Although many of the local developments matched the ideas proclaimed by the Council of Trent (1545-1563), not all of them did. This should come as no surprise, as not even all the papal institutions subscribed to the reforms. This case study illustrates that bottom-up processes were central to the early stages of the Catholic restoration. However, top-down processes also played a part, as explained above. In particular, in the later stages of the restoration (after the first decade following the fall of the Calvinist regime in Ghent), negotiation and conflict between local traditions and Catholic authorities become more frequent.

In this chapter I discuss the agency of parishioners and other institutions in the early restoration process of the parish building through the analysis of financial transactions. The next chapter will focus on the material changes and reconstruction works of St James.

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<sup>360</sup> Muller and van Eck, 'Foreword', 115–17; Muller, *St. Jacob's Antwerp Art and Counter Reformation in Rubens's Parish Church*.

<sup>361</sup> Firpo, 'Rethinking "Catholic Reform" and "Counter-Reformation": What Happened in Early Modern Catholicism - a View from Italy'.

For both chapters, the combined study of Van Vaernewijck's chronicle and the churchwarden accounts of St James has proven to be fruitful in understanding the impact of the first iconoclasm and the church's reaction to it. Van Vaernewijck's chronicle ended in 1568, so it is not used for investigating the period after the Calvinist Republic of Ghent. The running expenditure accounts, on the other hand, were also available for the period after 1584. These accounts are excellent sources for a quantitative approach as they more or less continued to follow the same structure. Furthermore, there are some extensive archival documents on the recovery after 1584 that have proven very useful in this study. For the first period, Van Vaernewijck's chronicle gives additional information about the church valuables destroyed during the first iconoclasm and the subsequent repairs. Most strikingly, however, it is a unique source that reveals the author's emotions during the attack and reconstruction of the parish church. His feelings and perspective paint a colourful picture of his perception of life during this moment of crisis. The downside of this is that the vivid narrative can obscure the more factual aspects of interest to historians.

The churchwarden accounts, on the other hand, remain virtually silent about the moment of destruction and the emotional impact on parishioners. However, they do summarize the payments made for the various repairs and the income received in this period. The economic logic of the accounts balances the more personal and emotional account of Van Vaernewijck. Combining the two perspectives is thus an interesting exercise for gaining insights into the local effects of the first iconoclasm.<sup>362</sup> For the restoration works during the period 1584-1600, the churchwarden accounts are the main source and they provide a considerable amount of information for the case study of St James.

### **3.1 Parishioners, the church building and its interior: whose property?**

One important question raised in the study of the restoration of the parish church is: whose property was the church (building and interior)? Who owned what, or at least, who was regarded as being responsible for the care and restoration of the various parts of the parish church? Jan Kuys's research is interesting in this regard. He found that in private

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<sup>362</sup> Bauwens, 'Under Construction? The Catholic Community in Ghent after the Beeldenstorm'.

churches, the church owner and parishioners had a joint responsibility for the church building. The influence of the Gregorian Reform in the 12<sup>th</sup> century then resulted in private church owners only retaining the right of patronage, so that the parishioners became solely responsible for the maintenance of the church building. However, the division of responsibilities in this realm remained a source of contention, as Canon law stated that the responsibility for the material aspects lay with the clergyman who held the benefice. The creation of a separate means of income to take care of the building, the so-called church fabric assets, was accompanied by the formation of an organization to manage these assets, known as the church wardens or church council (*kerkfabriek*). Thus, from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards, the laity had more agency in the management of the church building. Later, in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, Canon law confirmed this indirectly by stating that the benefice and fabric assets had distinct functions. Of course, depending on the local situation and type of church, the churchwardens could be clergymen or laymen. The appointment and duties of these churchwardens also varied, depending on the institutional background of the church.<sup>363</sup> Furthermore, parochial churchwardens did not always have control over the entire church building. In many English parishes, and in some parishes in the Low Countries as well, churchwardens were not responsible for the choir and the crypt.<sup>364</sup> However, there is no evidence that a similar division of responsibility was introduced into Ghent parishes. Wim Vroom and Llewellyn Bogaers who studied the organization of church finances for building projects in the late medieval Low Countries do not mention these divisions. The management of the whole church was in hand of the churchwardens. They had huge responsibilities and even financial obligations while they were not paid.<sup>365</sup>

While the churchwardens oversaw and organized the finances and building projects of the parish church, the parishioners could have more direct links with parts of the church building, its interior or objects. David De Boer points to the fact that many church objects

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<sup>363</sup> Jan Kuys, 'Secular Authorities and Parish Church Building in Late Medieval Towns in the Netherlands', in *Processions and Church Fabrics in the Low Countries during the Late Middle Ages. An Inquiry into Secular Influence on Ecclesiastical and Religious Matters on a Local Urban Level*, ed. Marjan De Smet, Paul Trio, and Jan Kuys, Preprint 111 (Leuven: Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2006), 109–11; For an example of how complex the relationship between the clergy and laity could be when it came to the spatial use of the church, see: Katherine French, 'Competing for Space: Medieval Religious Conflict in the Monastic-Parochial Church at Dunster', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 27, no. 2 (1997): 215–44.

<sup>364</sup> Kuys, 'Secular Authorities and Parish Church Building in Late Medieval Towns in the Netherlands', 111; Katherine French, 'Rebuilding St. Margaret's: Parish Involvement and Community Action in Late Medieval Westminster', *Journal of Social History* 45, no. 1 (2011): 119.

<sup>365</sup> Wim H. Vroom, *Financing Cathedral Building in the Middle Ages. The Generosity of the Faithful* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010); Llewellyn Bogaers, *Aards, Betrokken En Zelfbewust. De Verwevenheid van Cultuur En Religie in Katholiek Utrecht, 1300-1600* (Utrecht: Levend Verleden, 2008), 376–89.

were financed by parish funds or given by private donors. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, gifts to the churches of the Low Countries were regarded as the property of those who had donated them, even though they lost certain rights over the objects. Furthermore, even if the objects were considered to be the property of the church, a specific gift to the church from a private person often remained linked to the donor in other ways. For example, inscriptions of the name of the donor on liturgical objects could strengthen and extend the identification of objects with the donor and his or her family.<sup>366</sup> A very clear and often officially documented responsibility lay with those groups or families that had an altar or chapel in the church. It is hard to pinpoint the exact number of altars and chapels in St James in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, but Paul Trio calculates there were 42 in total. The majority belonged to guilds, while some chapels were the responsibility of wealthy families and brotherhoods. Most of the contracts between the churchwardens and the dean of the guild concerned stated that in exchange for the use of a chapel, the guilds had to decorate and furnish the chapel.<sup>367</sup>

The view that the parishioners were the owners of the church building and interior, or at least responsible for them, is also reflected by Van Vaernewijck, who when describing the destruction caused by the iconoclasts in the church often specified the donors or caretakers of the ruined objects. As a result, we know that the metal pillars around the high altar of St James had been a gift of master Joos Calloen, a patrician who, as Van Vaernewijck stressed, “had done a lot of good for the church”. The oak choir stalls had also been a gift from him.<sup>368</sup> Other objects or parts of the interior were considered as belonging to a group or organization. This was especially the case for the chapels and side altars. Van Vaernewijck recalled one of the most artistic altars of St James, which had

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<sup>366</sup> David de Boer, ‘Picking up the Pieces. Catholic Material Culture and Iconoclasm in the Low Countries’, *Bijdragen En Mededelingen Betreffende de Geschiedenis Der Nederlanden* 131, no. 1 (2016): 75–78; J.F. Van Beeck Calkoen, *Onderzoek Naar Den Rechtstoestand Der Geestelijke En Kerkelijke Goederen in Holland Na de Reformatie* (Amsterdam: J.H. De Bussy, 1910), 35–37; Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580*, 330.

<sup>367</sup> Paul Trio, ‘Volksreligie Als Spiegel van Een Stedelijke Samenleving. De Broederschappen Te Gent in de Late Middeleeuwen (12de-16de Eeuw)’ (doctoral dissertation, Louvain, Catholic University of Louvain, 1989), 678–80, 690–94, 738, 768–69; Jan Kuys, ‘Churchwardens’ Accounts and Parish Finances in the Netherlands during the Late Middle Ages’, in *Processions and Church Fabrics in the Low Countries during the Late Middle Ages. An Inquiry into Secular Influence on Ecclesiastical and Religious Matters on a Local Urban Level*, Preprint 111 (Louvain: Catholic University of Leuven, 2006), 101.

<sup>368</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 147 (I). “In Sente Jacobskeercke, heeft men bevonden, dat afghebroken waren die vier motalen pilaren met inghelen hebbende die teekenen van ons Heeren passie, die ter zijden ende voordien hooghen hautaer stonden, te weten wel alf af, ende hadden ghegheven gheweest bij meester Joos Van Caloen, een poortere die de keercke veel duechden dede, als onder andere ooc een nieu ghestoelte inden choor dat hij daer dede maken.”

stood in the chapel of the confraternity of St James and was destroyed by iconoclasts.<sup>369</sup> He also mentioned a closed chapel next to the chancel, which belonged to certain families of the *poorters* (burghers).<sup>370</sup>

When describing the damage done to the stained-glass windows in the nave, Van Vaernewijck particularly highlighted the destruction of the beautiful window of the guild of the shoemakers' apprentices (*elsenaars*) and the window near the seating for the nuns of St John's hospital.<sup>371</sup> The fact that the nuns immediately ordered and paid for a new window illustrates that they regarded it as their responsibility in some way. This might have been because of the proximity of the window to their seating, but it is possible that they had donated the original window. The gift of stained-glass windows was a well-known form of patronage among prominent citizens and institutions.<sup>372</sup>

Clergymen working in the parish of St James had also donated works of art. The three beautifully painted priest seats in St James, for example, had been commissioned by the parish priest Willem Doens, who had paid over 40 Flemish pounds *groten* for them.<sup>373</sup>

In their rage, the iconoclasts had not only targeted liturgical objects, images of saints and works commissioned by clergymen and nuns, but they had also attacked some of the tombs portraying images of deceased wealthy parish members. This was the case for the engravings on the grave of the former bailiff Franchoijs Vander Gracht and his wives, which lay in front of the high altar of St James. The commemorative plaque of lieutenant Bavier, situated in the choir, was also destroyed. However, the plaque of the deceased master Jan Van der Varent, who had been a lawyer in the Council of Flanders, was saved

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<sup>369</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 150 (I). "Ghelijc dat Sente Jacobs autaertafel ein partijen afghedaen was, die de broeders, diet Sente Jacobs in Galissien gheweest hadden, onderhilden, zoo voorscreven es, welcke tafele de constichste vander keercken es, ende onder ofte inden back es ghesneden de bataille oft strijt van Sente Jacob, ooc costelic verghult ende ghestoffeert. Hier up es als vader vande voornoemde confrerie buten up de dueren gheschildert Jan Poortier1 ende Christoffels Van Beveren, naert leven wel gheconterfeet, welcken Poortier onthooft was, omdat hij hem te breet ghemoeijt hadde int jaer XL. Daer hijnc an eenen pilaer een memoriaelkin van schilderie van eenen Wauter Ghautier, overleden der weerelt, jeghenover Sente Sebastiaens autae, djonghe ghilde van der schutterie."

<sup>370</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 151 (I). "Inden ommeghanck neffens den choor, up de zijde vander veemaerct, staet een afghesloten capelle toebehoorende zeker gheslachten vander poorterie als de Meerijngheers ende andere."

<sup>371</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 151 (I). "Maer inden bueck waren zij som zoo duerworpen (mits dat zij nederstaenende dat tgheboufte zoo wilde), dattet schenen visschersnetten te zijne, bijzonder die veinster daert zitten staet van denonnen in Sente Janshuus, die weder ter stont nieuwe doen maken was, ende die veinster van den helsenaers, ende was de constichste van Ghendt."

<sup>372</sup> Kuys, 'Secular Authorities and Parish Church Building in Late Medieval Towns in the Netherlands', 124–27.

<sup>373</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 148 (I). "die drie priesterlicke stoelen jeghenover, van oorduun ende Avennes steen, ende upden rugghe met een schoon schilderie hijstoriael, die doen maken waren van her Willem Doens, presbijtre, ende costen hem wel veertich ponden grooten, noch gheen jaer ghestaen hebbende".

because it had been removed by friends.<sup>374</sup> Van Vaernewijck also mentioned a painted plaque (*memoriaelkin van schilderje*) commemorating the deceased Wauter Ghautier, which hung on a pillar opposite the altar of the guild of St Sebastian. It is not clear whether this was destroyed during iconoclasm or if it could be saved.<sup>375</sup>

Similarly, other churches in Ghent had objects that could be linked to specific people. In the church of St Bavo, plaques belonging to the masters of the table for poor relief were destroyed. Van Vaernewijck named the masters together with descriptions of the smashed plaques.<sup>376</sup> He also noted the damage to the six metal pillars next to the high altar of St Bavo, which belonged to the Van de Baenstinghen family.<sup>377</sup> The tabernacle in the church of St Nicholas had been ordered and paid for by Andries Seijs, a wealthy linen merchant. The altar of the brotherhood of the Name Jhesus in St Nicholas was taken care of by the carriers, while the altar table of St Peter and St Paul was the responsibility of the “Romans”, also known as the confraternity of St Peter and St Paul.<sup>378</sup>

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<sup>374</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 148-149 (I); Joris De Zutter, *Te Triest Om't al Te Vertellen. Beeldenstorm in Gent. 1566. Het Ooggetuigenverslag van Marcus van Vaernewijck* (Ghent: Stad Gent, Uitgeverij Snoeck, 2016), 111. “De sepulture voorden hooghen autær wesende, eenen zeer grooten toetssteen staende up vier stuensels verheven, ooc van toetse, daerin gheschulpeert es den hauden hoochbalieu, dher Franchoijs Vander Gracht, met beede zijn huijsvrouwen, es in de aensichten de nuesen ghefortseert ende afgehauwen. Een epitaphie vanden auden Bavier, die luijtenant was, inden coor neffens die priesterlicke stoelen, was al gheweert; men zach maer den blooten muer, ende was van costelicke materialen als albastre ende dierghelijcke. Van ghelijcken was ooc gheweert ende afghedaen doen, een ander epitaphie, van de vrienden vanden overledenen meester Jan Van der Varent, een eersaem procuruer was inden raet van Vlaenderen, mits dat zijn epitaphie was, ende was al nieuwe ghemaect van Avennes steen ende rijckelic ghestoffeert ende verghult.”

<sup>375</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 150 (I). “Daer hijnc an eenen pilaer een memoriaelkin van schilderje van eenen Wauter Ghautier, overleden der weerelt, jeghenover Sente Sebastiaens autær, djonghe ghilde van der schutterie.”

<sup>376</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 141 (I). “Hier waren vier oft vijfve schoon epitaphien, som van marbere, albastere ende toetse, ende ooc andere van Avennessteen, costelic gheschildert ende ghestoffeert, dies om ghebroken ende som van deghene, die daer recht an hadden, eerde foele ghebuerde, wijselic afdoen doen waren. Deene was zeer costelic van de Bets, dander van meester Jan De Meij, die deken van de canonicken was, de derde van de Triest, de vierde van Bavier is ende de vijfste van Laureins Maes, waeraf de twee eerste van albastre, marber ende toetse waren, dandere van Avennessteen, maer rijckelic ghestoffeert.”

<sup>377</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 141 (I). “ende waren dees pilaren ghegheven van tgheslachte van de Baenstinghen, zoot bleeck an haer wapenen ende devijsen die boven daeran stonden, te weten een handtvul zonne”.

<sup>378</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 152-53; Trio, *Volksreligie als spiegel van een stedelijke samenleving. De broederschappen te Gent in de late middeleeuwen*, 454. Van Vaernewijck writes about St Nicholas's church: “welc Sacramentshuus doen maken was ende ghegheven van Andries Seijs, jeghenover den Fremenueren, een rijck coopman van lijnwade”. “Daernaer wasser die tafel van den name Jhesus, die de pijnders oft zacdraghers onderhilden, ende en was niet qualic ghesneden ende gheschildert platte schilderje van Lievin De Stoevere. Daarnaer was de autær tafele van Sente Pieter ende Sente Pauwels, die de Romeinen, die tot Roome gheweest hadden, onderhilden.”

There was clearly a link between the church objects and parishioners, but this association was of an ambiguous nature: individuals, families and groups could have varying degrees of “ownership” or responsibility over an object or a specific part of the church interior and not all these arrangements were legally documented. Furthermore, apart from the specific links between private individuals or groups and the church interior, there was also a common understanding that the church belonged to the whole parish community. The general financial contributions that parishioners made for the church interior reinforced this idea. For this reason, Van Vaernewijck claimed that the iconoclasts had destroyed things that belonged to the laypeople, or at least objects that they, their parents or ancestors had given to the church out of piety. Moreover, he stated that this was also the view of the clerics and that after the destruction it should be the ordinary parishioners who paid for the reconstruction of their parish church. This viewpoint has several implications. De Boer places it in the broader perspective of contemporaries, whom he believes regarded iconoclasm not as a religious conflict but an attack on the community. As a result, iconoclasts were regarded as criminals who needed to be severely punished.<sup>379</sup>

Although we should take into account that Van Vaernewijck’s view of iconoclasm as an attack on the community might have encouraged him to accentuate the strong bonds between church objects and the parish community, such bonds were neither new nor unique. During the Late Middle Ages the church interiors of many urban parishes in the Low Countries relied heavily on parishioners. In the case of St James, the church’s institutional background and financial arrangements meant that the parishioners would have to take responsibility for most of the reconstruction. Although this responsibility was nothing new, iconoclasm led to an unprecedented turning point in the relationship between parishioners and the religious material culture of their church. De Boer points to the fact that 16<sup>th</sup>-century Catholics had not created the church interior from scratch,

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<sup>379</sup> de Boer, ‘Picking up the Pieces. Catholic Material Culture and Iconoclasm in the Low Countries’, 75–78; Soen sees a similar viewpoint on iconoclasm in the official statements of the Habsburg authorities. They described iconoclasm as primarily an act of worldly *lèse-majesté*. Violet Soen, ‘The Beeldenstorm and the Spanish Habsburg Response (1566–1570)’, *Bijdragen En Mededelingen Betreffende de Geschiedenis Der Nederlanden* 131, no. 1 (2016): 100, 118–19; Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566–1568*, 164–168 (I). “Niet dat wij zegghen willen dat die gheestelicke zulcx verdient hadden, maer zij lieten thaer dijncken, ende en peinsden ter avontueren niet dat zij ruijneerden ende in sticken braken veel dijnghen, ja, verre tmeeste deel, dat de weerlicke personen toebehoorde, ofte uut devocie ghegheven hadden, ende moghelic sommighe van haren auders ende voorzaten, ende ghaven weder een oorzake dat de weerlicke personen wederom in eenen nieuwen grooten cost zouden vallen, omweder, dat ghebroken was, te repareren, ende dat bijsonder inde prochiekeercken, capellen ende dierghelijcke, die de priesters haer antreicken als zij wel gherepareert zijn; maer als zij ghebroken zijn oft bedorven, dan laten zij die upden hals van tghemeen volck, zegghende dat zij tghemeente toebehooren.”



but that it had developed over centuries through the interaction of previous generations for religious as well as social reasons. Moreover, the people attending church were not homogenous and different groups could attach different meanings to similar objects and rituals. When this religious landscape was destroyed, parishioners were forced to rethink their relationship with ecclesiastical objects and consciously restore or renew an important part of the material culture of their community.<sup>380</sup>

### 3.2 Secular and ecclesiastical governments in the restoration of St James

Before going into detail about the role of the parishioners of St James in the reconstruction of their church, it is important to examine the actions of the government in the restoration during and after the periods of crisis. The previous chapters have already examined the institutional reaction to the iconoclasm of 1566. However, the period following the defeat of the Calvinist Republic of Ghent (1584) has not yet been discussed. It is important to understand that after the regime fell, political rehabilitation was the first priority of Alexander Farnese's policy. This was in contrast to Alva's reign in the aftermath of the 1566 iconoclasm, which made religious orthodoxy a central policy from the beginning.<sup>381</sup> With Farnese, it was only after 1586 that citizens of Ghent had to prove their loyalty to Catholicism. Nevertheless, he also fervently promoted Catholicism. According to the literature, Farnese focused strongly on material recovery of the ecclesiastical infrastructure, which was already in the first phases of reconciliation. Many reconciliation treaties contained a clause demanding a meeting to discuss the repair of secularized or damaged church buildings and goods. A second priority in these treaties was the desecrated graveyards, monasteries and chapels. For this reason, Farnese immediately invited the (arch)bishops to reconcile the defiled churches. These reconciliations would be a major activity for several months.<sup>382</sup>

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<sup>380</sup> de Boer, 'Picking up the Pieces. Catholic Material Culture and Iconoclasm in the Low Countries', 79–80; French, 'Competing for Space: Medieval Religious Conflict in the Monastic-Parochial Church at Dunster', 217.

<sup>381</sup> Of course, Alva's policy was more complex than that. For his policy after 1566, see: Soen, 'The Beeldenstorm and the Spanish Habsburg Response (1566-1570)', 118.

<sup>382</sup> Violet Soen, "De reconciliatie van 'ketters'", p. 355. According to Kuys's research, during the Middle Ages sovereigns did not usually take action to sustain the material culture in churches, but instead they funded and donated specific gifts for a few religious institutions. Although the actions of Farnese are not generally the same as giving financial aid to the churches of the Low Countries, they illustrate a new interest in the general religious

In 1584, the archbishop of Mechelen, Johannes Hauchinus, consecrated the churches in Ghent, among them St James. However, in the 1580s, the Church as an institution was neither very visible in the reorganization and recovery of Catholicism nor in the church repairs.<sup>383</sup> The position of bishop of Ghent had been vacant since 1576. In 1584 a new bishop (Joannes Vonckius) was nominated, but he would never come to Ghent as he died in 1585. A similar sequence of events took place with the next appointment by king Philip II, namely Mattheus Rucquebusch, who died in 1586. The third appointee, Willem Lindanus, had barely been bishop for a year when he died in 1588. So, for most of the 1580s there was no bishop to lead the diocese of Ghent. A vicar general was put in charge during the period without a bishop, but his vicar generalship has yet to be studied thoroughly.<sup>384</sup>

As Farnese did not address the churches directly with his demand that the buildings be restored as fast as possible, it was the local government that became most closely involved in the restoration of the churches. According to Kuys, local authorities already had a say in the management of the church buildings. This could be through their influence in the election of the churchwardens and through the financial support provided for the larger building works, as witnessed in many towns from the 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards.<sup>385</sup> So in both periods under study, after 1566 and after 1584, the local government played an active role in restoring churches. How this impacted the parish of St James will be discussed in more detail below.

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material culture. This can probably be linked to the regulations of the Council of Trent. Kuys, *Secular authorities*, 121-122.

<sup>383</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 357, fo 26 vo; Soen, *Geen Pardon Zonder Paus! Studie over de Complementariteit van Het Koninkrijk En Pouseijk Generaal Pardon (1570-1584) En over Inquisiteur-Generaal Michael Baius (1560-1576)*, 356.

<sup>384</sup> Bauwens, 'Restoration and Reform of the Parish after Trent. The Case of St James in Ghent (1561-1630)', 2017; Emmy Gardin, 'De Contrareformatie Te Gent, 1584-1633' (Master's Thesis, Ghent, Ghent University, 1988), 7-13.

<sup>385</sup> Jan Kuys, 'Who Controlled the Urban Parish? Some Ways in Which Towns in the Late Medieval Northern Netherlands Got Control of Their Parish Churches', in *Processions and Church Fabrics in the Low Countries during the Late Middle Ages. An Inquiry into Secular Influence on Ecclesiastical and Religious Matters on a Local Urban Level*, Preprint 111 (Louvain: Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2006), 81-85.

### 3.3 Iconoclasm in 1566

#### 3.3.1 Destruction

Van Vaernewijck's account is quite specific about the destruction in Ghent. In St James, the iconoclasts attacked objects and parts of the interior that were essential for conducting Catholic services or that held an important symbolic value, such as the high altar and side altars, the pulpit. Furthermore, smaller ornaments, lighting and church utensils were broken, alongside stained-glass windows, sculptures, plaques, gravestones, the pipe organ and seats. But among all these objects, it was the destruction of the tabernacle that Van Vaernewijck lamented as a tremendous loss: "It had been such a fine work of art, decorated with paintwork, and it had reached higher than the arch of the church." The iconoclasts had demolished it down to its foundations and beheaded the statues that stood next to it. Only the metal fence around the tabernacle was left intact.<sup>386</sup> The metal pillars with sculpted angels carrying the symbols of the passion, a gift from Joos Calloen and placed around the high altar, were pulled down as well. At the last minute, the image-breakers decided to save the oak choir stalls – also a gift from Calloen – because they could be used as seats for the faithful during Calvinist preaching.<sup>387</sup> The three stone seats of the priests, however, were pulled down with ropes. Presumably, the painter of these seats, Jan van de Vivere, also took part in this destruction.<sup>388</sup> The iron priest seats in the choir, mostly used by elderly priests, were broken. Van Vaernewijck also mentioned the statue of St Christopher, which stood in the transept and was about the size of two men. Moreover, the iconoclasts threw down the crucifix, together with the statues of Our Lady and St John, onto the rood screen and damaged the sculptures of the apostles and Jesus that stood in front of the rood screen. Van Vaernewijck only noted the altar table of St James's chapel by name, as this was one of the most beautiful in the church, but he explained that practically no altar or statue escaped damage during the iconoclastic rage.<sup>389</sup>

Despite the details, Van Vaernewijck's descriptions showed his obvious emotional involvement, which makes his chronicle a precious document on how he and probably

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<sup>386</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 147–152 (I); For more about the meaning of tabernacles for both Catholics and iconoclasts, see: Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, 'Embodied Piety. Sacrament Houses and Iconoclasm in the Sixteenth-Century Low Countries', *Bijdragen En Mededelingen Betreffende de Geschiedenis Der Nederlanden* 131, no. 1 (2016): 52–55.

<sup>387</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 147–152 (I).

<sup>388</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 148 (I).

<sup>389</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 88 (I), 151 (I); J.D. Bangs, *Church Art and Architecture in the Low Countries before 1566* (Kirksville, 1997).

many Catholic contemporaries viewed the image-breaking. As the discussion on the ownership of the parish church shows, this perspective on the *Beeldenstorm* is closely linked to how parishioners perceived their parish church and the devotional objects within. For Van Vaernewijck, the parish church building and interior represented centuries of work and gifts donated by parishioners. Therefore, he explained, the iconoclasts had not attacked the clergy or idolatry as they had thought, but the community.

Van Vaernewijck's narrative of iconoclasm also reveals how strongly art, devotion, tradition and community were intertwined in early modern thinking and practice. One could argue that his descriptions of the image-breaking primarily reflect the wide-scale destruction brought about by the iconoclasts, and thus reveal a lack of selectiveness on the part of the image-breakers. Based on their actions, one could conclude that they did not know or did not care what they destroyed or, on the other hand, that they were intent on attacking objects of both a secular and religious nature and of both great artistic and practical value, as long as these could be linked with the Catholic Church. As we saw in the previous chapter, iconoclasts were a heterogeneous group and Van Vaernewijck pointed to the various, often personal, motives that had played a role in their actions.<sup>390</sup> This may explain their seemingly unselective approach to iconoclasm. However, it is important to note that early modern society did not make the same distinctions between the sacral and the secular as we would today. De Boer points out that church objects had multiple layers of meaning.<sup>391</sup> The value of an object was not solely determined by its sacredness. During his lamentation over the destruction in the church, Van Vaernewijck did not linger more over (the loss of) sacral aspects than artistic value. On the contrary, he particularly described the artistic value of most of the objects damaged and how they were linked with members of the parish. For example, almost all the altars in St James were attacked, but Van Vaernewijck mainly focused on the beautiful altar of the confraternity of St James. In his description of the destruction of the stained-glass windows and the tabernacle too, he particularly stressed the artistic value of the objects. This does not mean that these objects had no devotional use. In fact, the beauty (and other sensory aspects) of an object or image could enhance its religious character and further devotion. This was important in medieval Christianity, but had been emphasized by the Council of Trent as well.<sup>392</sup> The value of many of the objects lay in the combination of

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<sup>390</sup> Van Bruaene, 'Embodied Piety. Sacrament Houses and Iconoclasm in the Sixteenth-Century Low Countries', 53.

<sup>391</sup> de Boer, 'Picking up the Pieces. Catholic Material Culture and Iconoclasm in the Low Countries', 61.

<sup>392</sup> Henning Laugerud, Salvador Ryan, and Laura Katrine Skinnebach, 'Introduction', in *The Materiality of Devotion in Late Medieval Northern Europe*, ed. Henning Laugerud, Salvador Ryan, and Laura Katrine Skinnebach (Dublin, Portland: Four Courts Press, 2016), 1–5; Lee Palmer Wandel, 'The Reformation and the Visual Arts', in *Reform and*

different aspects: artistry, visual prominence, commissioner, age and tradition, devotional use, location in the church and place in the community. And all these aspects were rarely regarded as set apart from Catholicism. The feeling of loss was particularly poignant for the loss of objects that were unique. Artistry and historical background added greatly to this “uniqueness”, which explains the attention given to the destruction of works of art. As sacredness was often a result of consecration, which was relatively easy to reproduce, the loss of a purely sacred object, such as the Holy Sacrament, had a smaller impact on the parish.<sup>393</sup>

I will examine the value, meaning and use of objects and parts of the church interior in more detail in the following chapter, when the restoration of St James is discussed. This will add to the understanding of the impact of iconoclasm and the functioning of the parish church in early modern Ghent. For now, I will start with a general overview of the parish’s reaction by looking into the financial impact of the iconoclastic rage and the organization and funding of the restoration works.

### 3.3.2 Financing the repairs

Before turning to the accounts, I should acknowledge some of the limitations in the study of the restoration of St James. As discussed, the financial perspective was limited to the institution of the churchwardens. So if a guild master purchased a sculpture for the chapel of his guild, or if the institution of the Table of the Holy Spirit (the parochial institution for poor relief) paid for a work, this would not have been recorded in the accounts unless the churchwardens were involved. Gifts and quick repairs may also have escaped the accounts. There are indications that some restoration work had already taken place by the time Van Vaernewijck recorded the destruction in his narrative: the priest Willem Doens had funded the repair of the three stone priest seats that he had

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*Expansion 1500-1660*, ed. R. Po-Chia Hsia, vol. 6, *The Cambridge History of Christianity* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 345–48, 351, 360–67; Freedberg, *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response*, 12, 161–65; Wim François and Violet Soen, eds., *The Council of Trent: Reform and Controversy in Europe and Beyond (1545-1700)*, Vol. 3: *Between Artists and Adventurers*, vol. 3, 3 vols, Refo500 Academic Studies 35 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2018); John W. O’Malley, ‘Trent, Sacred Images and Catholics’ Senses of the Sensuous’, in *The Sensuous in the Counter-Reformation Church*, ed. Marcia B. Hall and Tracy E. Cooper (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 28–48.

<sup>393</sup> de Boer, ‘Picking up the Pieces. Catholic Material Culture and Iconoclasm in the Low Countries’, 61–63.

commissioned<sup>394</sup>, two lecterns that had been broken had been restored<sup>395</sup> and the nuns of St John had immediately ordered a new window after the destruction of their window<sup>396</sup>. These were most likely not the only actions for the material restoration of the church that escaped the accounts. Thus the accounts underrepresent the activities in the parish.

In fact, the iconoclasm of 1566 only left a few subtle traces in the accounts (see Fig 2). Both the expenditure and income of the 1566 accounts fail to reveal any remarkable features. Compared to the other accounts dating from the period 1562-1567, expenditure and income in the accounts book of 1566-1567 and the following year are at a record low. However, the difference with the years preceding iconoclasm is minor. Compared to the expenditure of about 43 pounds in the accounts of 1562-1563, St James's parish spent only 6 pounds less in 1566-1567. This difference is mainly the result of the reduced expenses for repairs in the church. Whereas in the years before iconoclasm, a separate category listed repairs or changes to the church building and its interior, the accounts for 1566-1567 show only a few transactions of this type. Another factor in the decrease in expenses was a decline in the purchase of candles, wax and oil. This may be because the church could not be used immediately after the attacks. So more candles would only be necessary once masses were performed again. Moreover, the destruction of the altars and chapels meant that chantry duties could not take place for some time. Another possible explanation for the smaller expenditure is the lack of funds. Collections during mass and other gatherings did not raise as much money as in previous years. This was partly the result of the disruption to mass services, but could also be explained by a lack of interest in mass (and offerings) in the months following iconoclasm. Indeed, Van Vaernewijck noted that even in December 1566 less than a third of the habitual churchgoers attended mass at St James.<sup>397</sup> He describes how on one occasion nobody made an offering during mass at the church, even though the organ had been played and the church bailiff had called on the parishioners to bring their offerings.<sup>398</sup> Clearly, Van Vaernewijck could not

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<sup>394</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 148 (I). "Die drie priesterlicke stoelen jeghenover, van oorduun ende Avennes steen, ende up den rugghe met een schoon schilderie hijstoriael, die doen maken waren van her Willem Doens, presbijtre, ende costen hem wel veertich ponden grooten, noch gheen jaer ghestaen hebbende, werden van quaetwillighe bouwen ooc afghebroken, tsanderdaechs smorghens upden XXIIJen angustij, ende met coorden die colommen omverre ghetrocken. Zij waren ghemaect van meester Henrick Van Ballare 1, schulptor ende gheschildert van eenen Jan Vander Riviere, pictor. Maer den voornoemden her Willem heeft ze weder eerlic updoen rechten, zoo zij tevoren waren..."

<sup>395</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 149 (I). "Zoo ooc van ghelijcken afghesmeten waren IJ lessenaers upt nieu ghestoelte, up elcke zijde eenen, maer zijn weder gherestaureert."

<sup>396</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 151 (I). "Bijzonder die veinster daer tzitten staet vande nonnen in Sente Janshuus, die weder terstont nieuwe doen maken was."

<sup>397</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 50 (II).

<sup>398</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 75 (II).

explain away this reluctance to give money by pointing to the church's infrastructure or the quality of the service.

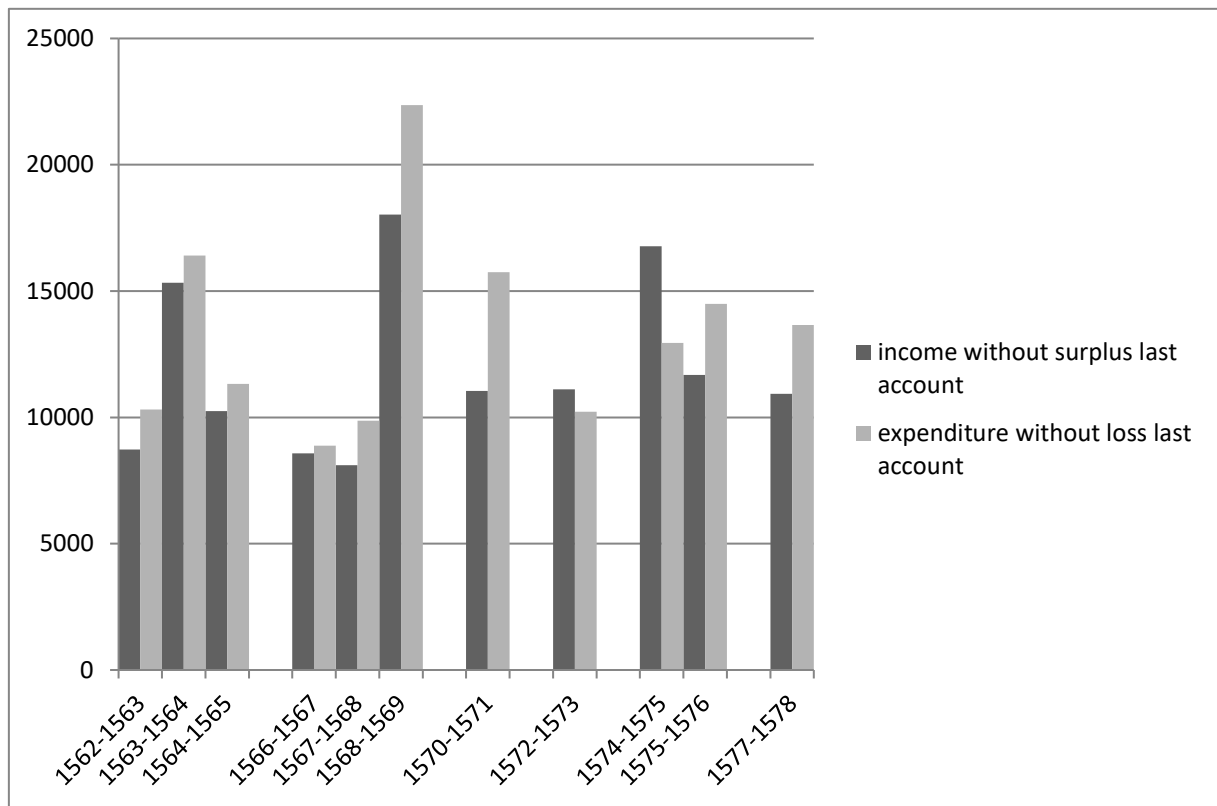


Figure 2 Graph annual income and expenditure of the churchwardens of St James in Flemish deniers groten (1562-1578).

More remarkable or revealing than the accounts of 1566-1567 are the accounts of the previous and following years. The impact of the iconoclastic fury is highlighted when looking at the reality behind the accounts of the year 1563-1564. During this period, a sum of about 27 pounds was spent on repairs and building materials, which was almost 40% of the total expenditure of that year. These expenses were mainly covered by a huge donation from the Table of the Holy Spirit of St James. Compared to the previous year and the following year, the repairs in 1563-1564 resulted in a rise in expenditure of about 60%. Work on the roof and gutters took up the largest portion of these expenses, but some of the money was paid to a mason and used for the purchase of chalk, sand and tiles.<sup>399</sup> Seen

<sup>399</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, 343, fo 18 vo – 20 vo.

in this light, the destruction of 1566 seems even more dramatic as it is clear that the church building had just undergone substantial restoration work.<sup>400</sup>

The accounts after the tumultuous year of 1566 reflect a rather slow reaction of the parish to the image-breaking, but it is possible that there was a delay between the repairs being carried out and the related financial transactions being recorded.<sup>401</sup> On the other hand, the slow recovery may reflect the chaos of the first months after iconoclasm. Indeed, the higher authorities had to intervene to encourage an organized restoration of the church patrimony. For the authorities, including the king's governor and the bishops, there was a direct link between resacralization and political restoration.<sup>402</sup>

The repairs to the churches could only be tackled in collaboration with the churchwardens, the guilds who had chapels or altars in the church and individual patrons. Many guilds had an altar or chapel in St James: the tapestry weavers, cloth shearers, woodworkers, woodcutters, carpenters, woodturners, wainwrights, coopers, shipwrights, basket makers, furriers, pelterers, the white and black tanners, girdlers, shoemakers' apprentices (elseneers) and old cloth dealers. Furthermore, the church also had a chapel or altar of the guild of St Margaret, St Barbara, the guild of the blind, the brotherhood of the Name Jhesus, the guild or brotherhood of St James and the brotherhood and chamber of rhetoric of Marien Theeren (In Honour of Mary).<sup>403</sup>

In the second half of June 1567, the city council, instigated by Margaret of Parma, sent for the deans of the craft guilds and brotherhoods. The magistracy ordered them to immediately start the repairs to their altarpieces and other damaged ornaments in the church. The guilds also had to send a list of their altars and chapels, so that officials could check on their work. Many of the guild members found this demand unjust, noted Van Vaernewijck, as those being forced to repair the chapels were not responsible for the destruction. However, Van Vaernewijck disagreed. He believed that many people had allowed it to happen in a way, because they had neither defended their altars against the image-breakers, nor hidden the precious altarpieces or other devotional objects, as others

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<sup>400</sup> Whether the iconoclasts targeted these roof works or not will become clear in the following chapter, where the restoration works are discussed in greater detail.

<sup>401</sup> For example, it seems the parish did not collect enough money to start the repairs until the year 1568-1569, but according to Marcus van Vaernewijck the tabernacle was already inaugurated at the beginning of that accounting year. One possible explanation is that some of the income and outgoings in the accounts of 1568-1569 actually relate to the previous year. Of course, it may be that the payment simply followed later (after the repairs) or that the cash was advanced – Van Vaernewijck himself did this on various occasions for the church. There is also the possibility that some expenses are not mentioned in the accounts.

<sup>402</sup> Spicer, 'After Iconoclasm: Reconciliation and Resacralisation in the Southern Netherlands, c. 1566-1585'.

<sup>403</sup> Trio, 'Volksreligie Als Spiegel van Een Stedelijke Samenleving. De Broederschappen Te Gent in de Late Middeleeuwen (12de-16de Eeuw)', 196-201.



had done.<sup>404</sup> Artworks and objects had been saved at St John's and St Bavo's, where the famous triptych, the Ghent altarpiece (The Adoration of the Mystic Lamb), had been hidden in the church's towers two days before the riots started. In St James too, some of the guilds had taken measures to prevent destruction. The shooting guild of St Sebastian placed in safekeeping a beautiful painting portraying Our Lady, St Barbara and St Catherine by the master painter Hugo van der Goes. The society of St Barbara hid their reliquary and the rhetoricians of Marien Theeren removed the side panels of their altar table and some sculptures to place these in safekeeping.<sup>405</sup>

Van Vaernewijck's position as a *vingtenier* in the weeks preceding iconoclasm had brought him into direct contact with the opinions of guild members on protecting the church. He knew exactly which men had decided to defend the church and which had not. Indeed, only a minority had been interested in guarding the church. Research on other towns in the Low Countries for this period has shown that certain towns managed to prevent or stop iconoclasm.<sup>406</sup> So Van Vaernewijck definitely had a point; many of the guild members seem not to have cared about possible damage to the church before the image-breaking, and afterwards too they seem to have had little interest in restoring the church. But as a churchwarden of St James and a Catholic who valued a beautiful church interior highly, he wanted the repairs to proceed regardless of the matter of who was guilty of the destruction.

Van Vaernewijck also argued against the idea that only those who had actually taken part in the image-breaking had to pay. He thought that this was not a realistic option, as most of the iconoclasts were very poor and some of them had already fled or been hanged. By pointing out that the image-breakers were mainly poor and marginal, he hoped to convince the reader that Ghent society, as a whole, had hardly been involved in the destruction, at least not directly. Although this position fits in with other attempts in his chronicle to minimize the responsibility of the local inhabitants of Ghent for the iconoclasm, it does not reflect the reality. Van Vaernewijck was a member of the Ghent magistracy in this period, and he followed a line of thinking that is evident in many town governments that tried to place the blame for the image-breaking on foreigners.<sup>407</sup> Van Vaernewijck admitted that there were some people of means who were guilty of iconoclasm, but he believed that many of them regretted their actions. According to him,

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<sup>404</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 258 (II).

<sup>405</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 88, 145-46, 150-151 (I); Trio, 'Volksreligie Als Spiegel van Een Stedelijke Samenleving. De Broederschappen Te Gent in de Late Middeleeuwen (12de-16de Eeuw)', 198; Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, 188 (II).

<sup>406</sup> Suykerbuyk, 'De Sacra Militia Contra Iconomachos. Civic Strategies to Counter Iconoclasm in the Low Countries (1566)', 22-27, 31, 33.

<sup>407</sup> Suykerbuyk, 22-25; Lamont, *Het Wereldbeeld van Een Zestiende-Eeuwse Gentenaar Marcus van Vaernewijck*, 58.

these men now wished to pay for the cost of the damage, or even fourfold, in order to ease their conscience, but they did not dare speak up. Moreover, many others knew the perpetrators and their deeds but preferred to remain silent, as they did not want to be responsible for another man's death.<sup>408</sup> Of course, Van Vaernewijck could not have known every iconoclast's reasons for taking part in the image-breaking, nor their level of regret, so again he is making an effort to counter the image of a guilty Ghent. Indirectly, he advocates against the search for those responsible by arguing that this would only bring more death. As a member of the magistracy, he preferred a more peaceful resolution where everyone paid for the damage, regardless of their level of involvement in the image-breaking. Although there were probably practical and political reasons for this regulation, civic peace remained an important motive in the city's policies, including when it came to church restoration.

Another reason why parishioners were reluctant to start the repairs was the fear (and rumour) that more iconoclasm would follow.<sup>409</sup> This is not surprising, considering how the power of the Reformed grew and the widespread anticlerical feelings in Ghent, especially during the Wonder Year. Furthermore, news of iconoclastic riots in other areas of the Low Countries had reached Ghent. As early as September and October, more organized forms of iconoclasm took place in various towns across the northern Low Countries.<sup>410</sup> As a result, it would still be several months before organized action was taken for the reconstruction of churches. In fact, it was not until end September 1567, after the magistracy ordered action, that a special commission assessed the damage inflicted on the church of St James. The commission comprised the dean, the two parish priests, the three churchwardens (including Marcus van Vaernewijck), the two Holy Spirit masters, a painter and a glass-blower. Knowing that the parishioners would be held financially responsible for the repairs, they decided to give a moderate estimate. Perhaps the commission was worried that the parishioners lacked resources, but they may also have thought it unjust to make them pay for what others had done. Van Vaernewijck echoed the complaint of the guilds when he wrote that the commission hoped that some iconoclasts could be forced to pay, or that at least some of the wealthy people that had strong ties with the Calvinists would contribute.<sup>411</sup> The commission's prudence would also have been influenced by specific events that had dominated the Wonder Year. Having seen the popularity of the hedge preaching, and the diminished interest in mass, the commission probably also feared that many people would be unwilling to pay the high costs of restoring their parish church.

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<sup>408</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 259-260 (II).

<sup>409</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 260-261 (II).

<sup>410</sup> Van Bruaene, Jonckheere, and Suykerbuyk, 'Introduction. Beeldenstorm: Iconoclasm in the Sixteenth-Century Low Countries', 4-5.

<sup>411</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 74-76 (III).

The city government had to intervene again to instigate repairs to the chapels of St James and other parish churches. In March 1568, the magistrates repeated their order to the craft guilds that they restore their chapels, so that church services could continue with suitable honour and reverence. In the ordinance, which listed all the necessary repairs, the magistrates also referred to letters containing orders from the duke of Alva, sent in February 1568 to the Council of Flanders. It is clear that the urban governments assumed that all the "Christian people" would help financially to restore "God's temple".<sup>412</sup> The lack of sources means it is impossible to check whether all the guilds and brotherhoods responded and repaired their chapel or altar in the end. However, we know that the well-documented Marien Theeren repaired a chrome statue of Our Lady, two statues of prophets and ordered a new stained-glass window for their chapel.<sup>413</sup>

A year after the assessment, things had clearly changed inside the church building. The churchwarden accounts that cover the period 1568-1569 registered most of the repairs arranged by the churchwardens of St James. Thus the repairs made by the guilds or wealthy families to altars or chapels stay under the radar. The accounts of 1568-1569 also listed all the parishioners who contributed to a general collection of alms, where the parish priest, churchwardens and Holy Spirit masters went from door to door across the whole parish. The accounts were signed in January 1570 by the parish priest Adriaen Van Loo, churchwardens lord Jan Damman, Christoffels Vanderhaghen and Pieter Dhannins, and Holy Spirit masters Roelant Van Hembyze, Joos De Brune and Pieter Dhamere.<sup>414</sup> These were the men who most likely organized the tour of the parish (*ommegang*). The collection was organized in order to pay for the tabernacle and rood screen, revealing how important these constructions were for the parish church. It is no accident that it was these repairs that Van Vaernewijck focused on in his chronicle (see below). There are 465 parishioners listed as having donated money, ranging between 1 denier and over 2 pounds (480 Flemish denier groten). Some of the parishioners contributed unpaid labour instead of money. In total, the parish gathered over 37 pounds, which means that on average the contributors gave a little less than 1 shilling or 12 denier, which was about the daily wage of a mason's journeyman.<sup>415</sup>

It has proved difficult to find information about these donors. Only the more prominent members of the parish have left their names in other sources, enabling us to link them with this collection list. The following 19 parishioners on the list were or had

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<sup>412</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 293-295 (III).

<sup>413</sup> Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, *Om Beters Wille. Rederijkerskamers En de Stedelijke Cultuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (1400-1650)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 151.

<sup>414</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 347, fo 31 vo.

<sup>415</sup> Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 838.

been an alderman or a receiver (responsible for finances and bookkeeping) in the magistracy: Joos de Brune, Lievin de Buck, Lievin van Casele, Omaer Claessens, François De Clerck, Pieter Dhanins, Loys van Doreslaghe, Philips de Gruutere, Willem van Auweghem, Lowys Van Havere, Pieter de Keysere, Joos vander Saffelt, François van der Sare, Joos Schauteete, Marcus van Vaernewijck, Jan vanden Velde, Joos van de Vivere, Jan de Vos and Jacob de Vrient.<sup>416</sup> There were 13 parishioners who were or had been in previous years a member of the Table of the Holy Spirit or a churchwarden of St James: Gillis Callant, Laureyns de Grave, Laureyns de Groote, Christoffels Vanderhaghen, Willem van Auweghem, Jan de Keysere, Lievin de Meyere, Lievin de Moor, Zegher Vanderstraten, Lievin Tayaert, Marcus van Vaernewijck, Jan van de Vivere and Pieter Dhanins. Clearly, there was an overlap with the group of magistrates. A few others on the collection list would become an alderman or receiver in the future: Jan de Meyere, Joos van de Moortele, Jan de Stoppelaere and Jan van Tombeelee.<sup>417</sup> Not surprisingly, most of the men in this group donated more than the average amount. The churchwardens and Holy Spirit masters who had never been aldermen donated on average a little more than 3 shillings. The gifts of those who were or had been aldermen were even more exceptional: on average over 7 shillings per person. Indeed, the seven largest donations to the collection all came from members of the magistracy. Intriguingly, the largest gift was from a woman, Mevrouw van Kethulle, but she was recorded together with the city council's secretary Hembyze.<sup>418</sup> This woman must have been the wife of Willem van den Kethulle, who had been the head alderman (*voorschepen*) of the bench of the *Keure* in 1564-1565 and would hold this position again for another three years after 1570.<sup>419</sup>

There were other women who donated and were listed as widows of deceased aldermen. Examples include the widows of Joris Aerts, Pieter de Bellemakere, Lieven Hendricx, Ghyselbrecht Terlens and Gheeraert Triest. In fact, a total of 70 women were recorded as donors in this collection, though usually not in their own name but the first and last name of the (deceased) husband. Most women were only listed as the donor of the gift if their husband was deceased or absent for a long period of time. This was because the gifts were registered per household. A woman could only be the head of the household if her husband was dead. According to the law, a married woman was considered unqualified to manage her property or act as an active legal partner in financial transactions while her husband was alive. Even though the study of everyday practices

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<sup>416</sup> SAG, *Memorieboek stad Gent*, part II 1501-1572, p. 242-363.

<sup>417</sup> Somers, *Inventaris van Het Oud Archief van de Kerkfabriek En Parochie Sint-Jacobs Te Gent Met Inbegrip van de Parochiale Instellingen*. (1231) 1302-1885, 41-48.

<sup>418</sup> RAG, OKA Sint-Jakobs Gent, no 347, fo 11 ro – 17 vo.

<sup>419</sup> Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 806.

based on the customs of Ghent proves that (married) women did take initiative in this realm, especially in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, patriarchal structures dominated certain areas of administration.<sup>420</sup> As a result, the list cannot be used to analyse whether men or women were more generous or more sympathetic towards their parish church. The names recorded follow a legal logic that does not shed light on the motivation or initiative of the various individuals belonging to a household.<sup>421</sup> In the case of the collection list, which seems at first glance to be a less official and unimportant document, the possible reasons for registering the names so rigidly according to patriarchal constraints are diverse. First of all, it could simply have depended on (the habits of) the churchwardens in charge of the collection or the bookkeeper who registered the names in the final accounts. The system used most likely prevented households being counted twice. Seen in the specific context of the past Wonder Year and the repressive measures that followed, the collection for the restoration of the church also takes on a strong political significance. Those who donated showed that they cared about the church and distanced themselves from iconoclasm. The churchwardens might have been aware that the list could be used to prove loyalty to the church, which made it even more important to register the head of the household and so implicitly include the whole household, instead of just a single member. Moreover, as it was mainly men who were found guilty of iconoclasm and heresy, their names could be especially important. The official nature of the list could also be the reason that in the absence of her husband, Mevrouw van Kethulle was recorded as the donor together with the secretary. The registration of the name of the secretary might have been a way of rendering the gift more official. In this case, the household was less important and recording the secretary's name aided the understanding that this gift came from the head alderman of the bench of the *Keure* of Ghent.

The fact that several men contributed to the church collection by offering to work on the repairs shows their strong resolve, or perhaps the pressure they were under, to show their good will. Lieven Luenis was one of these men and claimed that he “*zal gratie doen*” by restoring the glass-stained window of the guild of the shoemakers' apprentices up to a value of 1 guilder.<sup>422</sup> “*Gratie*” could be understood to mean “giving grace”, “gratefulness”

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<sup>420</sup> Shennan Hutton, ‘Competing Conceptualizations of Women’s Economic Activities in Fourteenth-Century Ghent’, *Handelingen Der Maatschappij Voor Geschiedenis En Oudheidkunde Te Gent* 59 (2005): 43–45, 51–52, 54; Martha C. Howell, *Women, Production and Patriarchy in Late Medieval Cities*, *Women in Culture and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); Veerle Vandeputte, ‘De Pest Te Gent 1568-1640. Bijdrage Tot de Studie van de Pest-Epidemieën in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden.’ (Master’s Thesis, Ghent, Ghent University, 1986), 274–75.

<sup>421</sup> French, ‘Rebuilding St. Margaret’s: Parish Involvement and Community Action in Late Medieval Westminster’, 156.

<sup>422</sup> RAG, OKA Sint-Jakobs Gent, no 347, fo 11 ro – 17 vo. “Zal gratie doen int maken vande glaesveynstere van de *Elseneers* tot eenen gulden.”

or "offering", but it was also the word used when dissidents appealed for mercy. It is not very clear whether Luenis offered his work voluntarily or not.

Van Vaernewijck highlighted the inauguration of the new tabernacle (*sacramentshuis*) in his account of 1568 (see below) and ascribed the good state of the church to the generosity of the parishioners.<sup>423</sup> This was most likely a reference to the collection analysed above. The diversity of the donations in this collection (from unpaid work to two pounds) does indeed suggest that parishioners from different kinds of social backgrounds had shown generosity. However, only 465 names were listed, whereas the parish must have had over 3000 adults. Even if these names represent 465 different households, the list shows that only a portion of the parish had been "generous".<sup>424</sup> Despite the registration of all the donors, the collection was not that impressive. It is possible that people refrained from donating due to anticlericalism and a sense of injustice, believing that those who were guilty of the destruction should pay. But the bad state of the economy and the fact that other institutions (for example poor relief) held collections as well (see below) could also have played a role. Van Vaernewijck took this into account when he rejoiced over the generosity. Furthermore, as mentioned above, material gifts to the church or repairs that did not involve the churchwardens were not registered in the accounts and the brotherhoods and guilds held separate accounts. The involvement of the parishioners cannot be fully measured by only looking at the churchwarden accounts.

Despite doubts about the true generosity and motivation of the parishioners and the lack of a complete picture, the gifts recorded in the accounts of 1568-1569 had a spectacular effect on the church. As a result of the donations, the total income of St James's churchwardens doubled compared to the previous year. The expenditure, in turn, more than doubled because of the repairs. The large sum of money collected from the parishioners is striking. The few accounts we have of the period before the *Beeldenstorm* do not register anything like it. There were restoration works (mainly work on the roof) carried out in 1563-1564. As mentioned above, about 27 pounds was spent. However, the funds for those works had not come directly from parishioners but from the parochial institution for poor relief.<sup>425</sup> Clearly, the parishioners did not always finance the

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<sup>423</sup> Vaernewijck, *Van die beroerlicke tijden*, IV, pp. 203-204; Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, II, pp. 175-181.

<sup>424</sup> My estimate of 3000 adults is based on the calculations of Blockmans for the population of St James in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and of Dambruyne for the population of Ghent in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. See: W. Blockmans, 'Peilingen naar de sociale structuren te Gent tijdens de late 15e eeuw', in W. Blockmans et al., *Studien betreffende de sociale structuren te Brugge, Kortrijk en Gent in de 14e en 15e eeuw* (Gent, 1971), p. 248-249; J. Dambruyne, *Mensen en centen. Het 16de-eeuwse Gent in demografisch en economisch perspectief*, *Verhandelingen der Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde te Gent XXVI*, 2001 (Gent, 2001), p. 72.

<sup>425</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, nos 341-387.

restoration works of the church building directly, which makes the collection of 1568 even more remarkable.

The sudden increase in expenditure in 1568-1569 was not repeated in the following years. The next available accounts (1570-1571) show that a smaller amount of money was spent on repairs, but it still exceeded the amount spent on repairs in 1563-1564. Furthermore, the total expenditure recorded in the accounts of 1570-1571 was 116 pounds, which was a record high for the period 1562-1577. This total was the result of the large deficits inherited from previous years (1568-1571) and not from new outgoings, so it is not visible in Figure 2, which excludes the losses and surpluses of previous years. If we do take the losses into account, we see that the outgoings started to fall only after 1571. Thus it took the church until 1571 to gather enough income to pay for the repairs of the previous years.

### 3.4 Church restoration after the fall of the Calvinist Republic of Ghent

For the period after 1568 we have no vivid eyewitness descriptions of the church and parishioners of St James like in the account by Van Vaernewijck. The chronicler Cornelis died before the start of the Calvinist Republic. His brother Philips Van Campene lived throughout this period in Ghent, but the edited version of their account ends in 1571.<sup>426</sup> During the seven-year Calvinist regime, the church would be heavily damaged again. Between May and August 1578, a new wave of iconoclasm struck convents and churches. Afterwards, many religious buildings were closed down or used for other purposes, and goods were confiscated and sold. In September 1584, the Calvinist regime came to an end as the city capitulated to Farnese.<sup>427</sup> The churchwarden accounts recorded the financial transactions made by the churchwardens after the return of Ghent to Habsburg rule. Indirectly, they provide a good overview of what happened to the church building of St James and will form the focus of the following analysis.<sup>428</sup>

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<sup>426</sup> Van Campene, *Dagboek van Cornelis En Philip van Campene Behelzende Het Verhaal Der Merkwaardigste Gebeurtenissen Voorgevallen Te Gent, Sedert Het Begin Der Godsdienstberoerten Tot Den 15e April 1571*, XIV–XVI.

<sup>427</sup> Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 660–77; Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, 183–84.

<sup>428</sup> For more about the political background of and social developments during the Calvinist Republic, see: Van Bruaene, 'Les Républiques Calvinistes (1577-1585)'; Van Bruaene, 'A Religious Republic and Fortress'; Despretz, 'De Instauratie Der Gentse Calvinistische Republiek (1577-1579)'.

## Income and expenditure of the churchwarden accounts after 1584

The end of the Calvinist Republic is easily detected in the accounts of St James. Unlike after the iconoclasm of 1566, the upheaval seems to have resulted in a totally different parish. In the accounts covering the two-year period of 1583-1585, both the income and expenditure increased by more than fivefold compared to what they had been annually in the decade before the Calvinist Republic. As the Calvinist regime was still in place up until September 1584, and the church was not being used during this period, it is logical that the bulk of the expenditure and income in these accounts dates from the period following September 1584. They could thus be attributed to the year 1584-1585 at the earliest, but in fact many separate transactions mention the year 1586.<sup>429</sup>

Apart from the ordinary (serial) churchwarden accounts, there was one set of separate accounts which was specifically set up for repairs to St James and listed collections of alms in the parish and repairs made to the church between 1584-1586. These accounts did record many transactions dating from 1584. The income in these special accounts alone, including loans, totalled over 630 pounds.<sup>430</sup> The outgoings registered in these accounts came to over 951 pounds.<sup>431</sup> Although these special accounts covered almost two years, these numbers are enormous. In comparison, the highest total expenditure of the parish before 1584, found in the accounts of 1570-1571, amounted to 116 pounds. This figure also included the debt of previous years. Thus the accounts of 1584-1586 illustrate, as no other, the intense work on repairs after the fall of the republic. Furthermore, they show that the churchwardens immediately sprang into action when Catholicism was restored. This is in contrast with the period that followed the first iconoclasm of 1566. I will discuss this initial period of church restoration and fundraising in more detail later, referring to both the special and ordinary accounts. First, I give an overview of the totals of the ordinary churchwarden accounts. This means the accounts specifically for repairs are not included in the following graphs, which show the church's income and expenditure between 1561 and 1590.

The five ordinary annual accounts following on from the ordinary accounts of 1583-1585 reveal that both expenditure and income were high. The accounts of 1585-1586 show that expenditure was almost a third higher than the outgoings of the previous accounts of 1583-1585. It then gradually decreased over the following three years, with expenditure

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<sup>429</sup> The church had low expenditure and income during the first year of these accounts, just as in the previous two accounts, because the period of Calvinist Rule extended to 17 August 1584. The increased amounts seen in the accounts of 1583-1585 should thus be attributed mainly to the second year of the accounts (or even later), during which Ghent reverted to Catholic and princely rule.

<sup>430</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 25, "*rekening van omgehaalde gelden en uitgaven voor de herstelling van de kerk 84-86*" (special accounts for repairs 1584-1586), fo 19 vo.

<sup>431</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 25, fo 79 ro.



for 1588-1589 totalling about half the amount it had been at its “peak” in 1585-1586. This figure is still relatively high, as it more or less equals the amount spent in 1568-1569 (the year of most repairs after the first iconoclasm). The trend then reversed and the accounts of 1589-1590 recorded a new peak, with outgoings more than a third higher than in 1583-1585 and an income that had more than doubled. The following year expenditure was back to the level of 1588-1589.

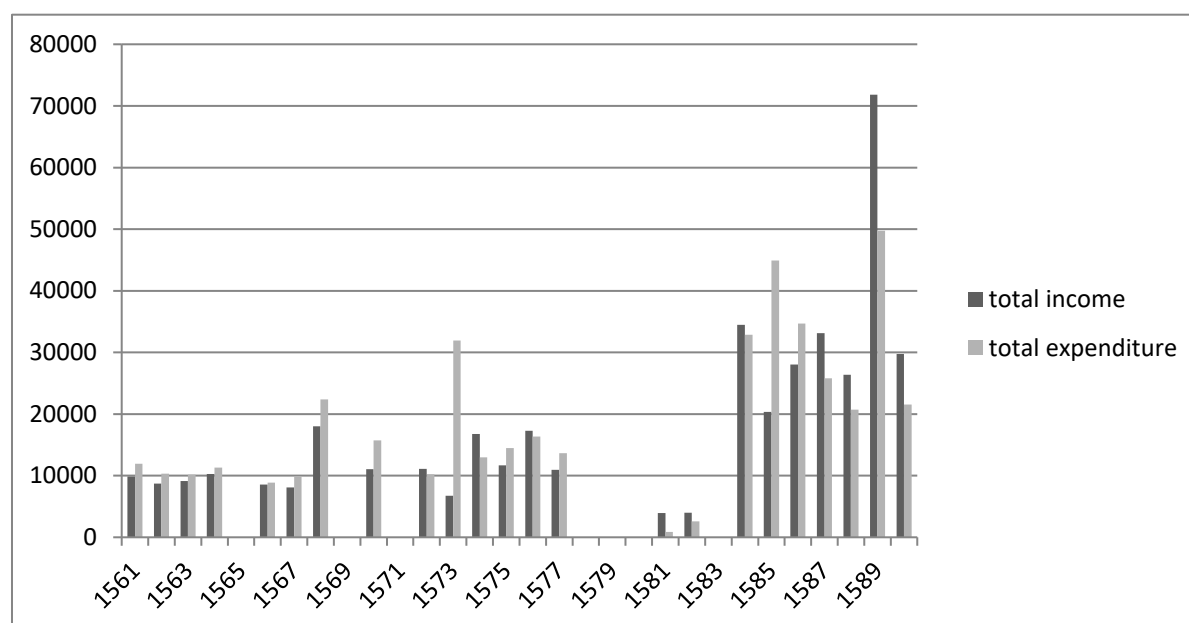


Figure 3 Graph annual income and expenditure (without surpluses or losses from previous years) of the churchwardens of St James in Flemish deniers groten (1561 to 1590).<sup>432</sup>

Figure 3 and most of the following ones are based on the above-mentioned churchwarden accounts. Certain accounts are missing or were not analysed. For the accounts that covered more than one year, the average amount spent per year was calculated, except for the accounts of 1583-1585 for reasons explained above.

## Inflation

An obstacle to gaining a good understanding of the graph is the hyper-inflation that occurred during the economic crisis of this period. Simply deflating the amounts is not an option as the prices of products increased by different amounts. Workmen’s wages followed a different trend and by no means did they keep up with the increase in grain

<sup>432</sup> In this graph, the amounts represent the totals for income and expenditure of the churchwardens recorded in the ordinary accounts. As a result, the rise in income and expenditure for the year 1562-1563 is not visible as the gift of the Table of the Holy Spirit and the expenses for the repairs were registered separately. One account was spread over two years: 1583-1585, which is shown as to belonging only to 1584-1585 in this graph. See further for more information on the right timing.

prices. There are techniques to calculate these differences in purchasing power, but even after these calculations the interpretation of the figures is not self-evident. In order to understand how these developments can be related to changes in the relationship between the parishioners and their church, a closer look at the qualitative information in the accounts and an understanding of the share of specific income or outgoings in the totals seems more useful. Nevertheless, to show the importance of inflation, I recalculated the expenditure and income of St James, deflating the amounts on the basis of the wages of a mason's journeyman, as shown in figure 4. The deflated amounts do indeed reveal a smaller contrast between the period before the Calvinist Republic and after, but an increase in both expenditure and income is still visible.

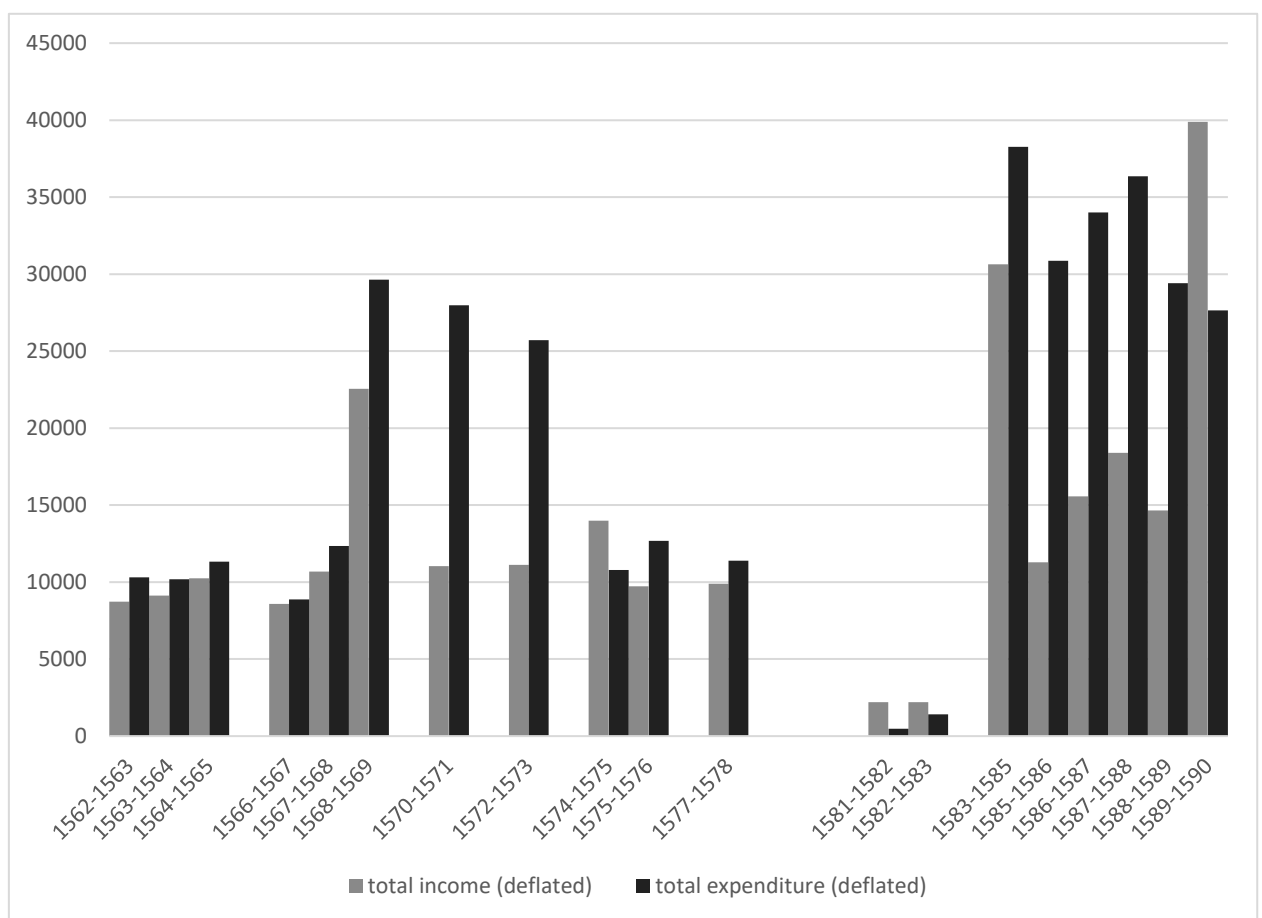


Figure 4 Graph total deflated income and expenditure of the ordinary churchwarden accounts of St James in Flemish deniers groten per set of accounts. Both income and expenditure were deflated using the evolution in the wages of a mason's journeyman (1562-1590).<sup>433</sup>

<sup>433</sup> Dambruynne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 837-38. I used Dambruynne's table of the annual wage of a mason's journeyman in Ghent and Antwerp to calculate the inflation.

However, the graph above is not an accurate reflection of the reality. As people's wages did not keep up with the soaring food prices, there was actually less money left to offer to the church than in the period before the Calvinist Republic. To illustrate this, I added in the average annual budget of a mason's journeyman after paying for house rent and the minimum amount of grain necessary to maintain an average worker's family, as shown in figure 5. This time none of the amounts are deflated.

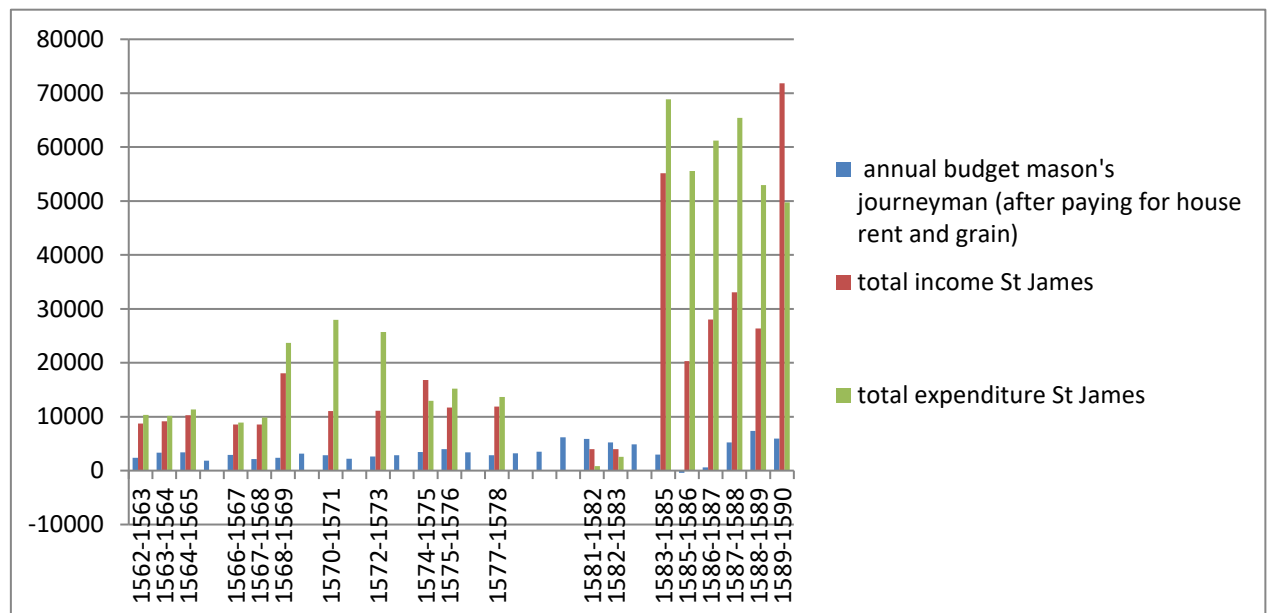


Figure 5 Graph total income and expenditure of the ordinary churchwarden accounts of St James compared to the annual budget available to a mason's journeyman after paying for house rent and the minimum amount of grain necessary for the average worker's family, in Flemish deniers groten per set of accounts (1562-1590).<sup>434</sup>

The graph above shows how the budget of a mason's journeymen increased in the 1570s and the beginning of 1580s. However, it fell sharply, albeit for a short period, after the fall of the Calvinist Republic and only rose to its previous level in 1587. In 1585-1586, ordinary people faced great hardship. According to Dambruyne's research, a journeyman needed over 107% of his income for his basic livelihood. Figure 5 therefore shows a negative number. In order to illustrate more clearly how the income and expenditure of the church were related to the budget, I constructed figure 6. This graph shows the number of annual budgets of a journeyman needed to cover the income and expenditure of St James. It thus illustrates how the income and expenditure of the church were related to the budget of ordinary parishioners. As the budget of a journeyman in 1585-1586 was

<sup>434</sup> Dambruyne, 837-38, 843-45. In order to calculate the annual budget, I combined the table of the annual wages of the mason's journeymen in Ghent and Antwerp with the table that lists per year what percentage of these wages was needed to pay the rent and grain for an average worker's family. Only one set of accounts covers (in theory) two years: 1583-1585. Later discussion will show it covered in practice de transactions of more or less one year, which justifies comparing it with the other accounts and the annual budget of a mason's journeyman.

below zero, a useful calculation of the number of budgets needed for the income and expenditure of that year was not possible. It is clear, however, that in comparison to other years an extremely high number of budgets would be needed to produce the equivalent of the figures in the accounts. Thus the graph shows a fictitious amount for this account, slightly higher than the one for the year 1586-1587, when the budget of a journeyman was at its lowest positive point.

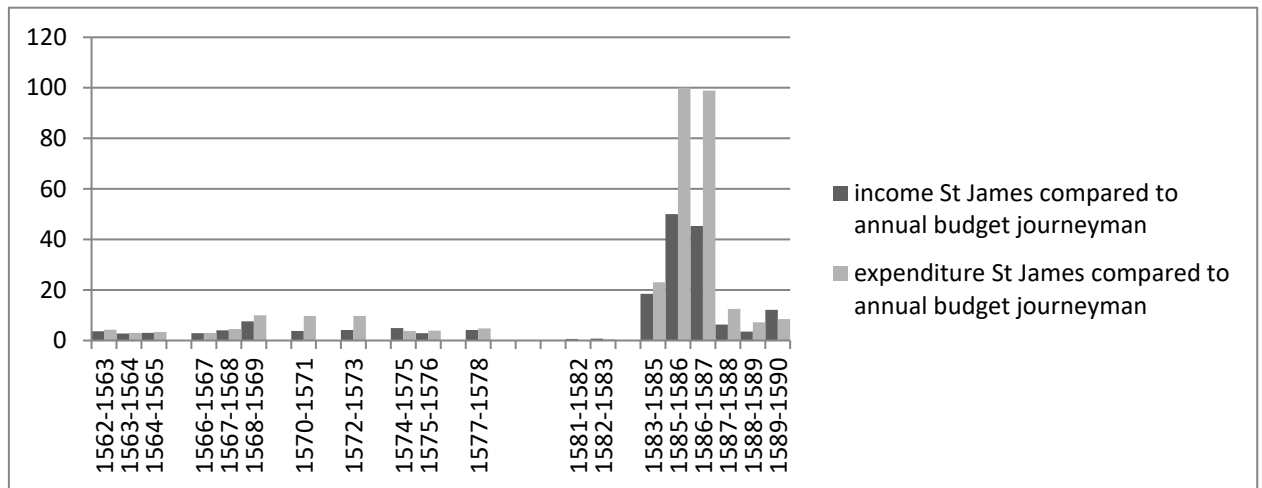


Figure 6 Graph number of annual budgets of a Ghent mason's journeyman needed to cover the total income and expenditure of the ordinary churchwarden accounts of St James (1562-1590).<sup>435</sup>

This graph gives a new perspective that accentuates the extravagant sums recorded in the church finances in the first three years following the end of the Calvinist regime. Compared to what ordinary workmen could spend in these years, the amounts are spectacular and in sharp contrast to what was spent after the first iconoclasm. From 1587 onwards, church finances and workmen's budget were more in balance, even though the income and expenditure of St James were still proportionately higher than they had been on average in the period before 1584. Figure 6 omits the special accounts exclusively for repairs to the church between 1584 and 1586, so the figures for the period 1583-1586 are highly underestimated. Immediately after the fall of the Calvinist regime, both income and expenditure rose spectacularly. Although the graph shows an interesting overview that takes into account the cost of living, it does have some limitations. The situation presented is only valid for one professional group (a mason's journeyman) and only the prices of grain and house rents were taken into account. The budgets of wealthier members of the parish would have been less severely affected by the fluctuating grain

<sup>435</sup> I calculated the annual income and outgoings registered in the churchwarden accounts of St James as multiples of the annual budget available to a Ghent mason's journeyman after paying for house rent and the minimum amount of grain necessary for the average worker's family. For this, I used Dambruyne's analysis from his work cited above.

prices, whereas poorer members (apprentices or unemployed people) would have seen their budgets cut even more sharply. Furthermore, the costs of other basics, such as beer and clothing, were not taken into account in this graph. Finally, there is an important expense that remains hidden in this graph: the reconciliation tax. The treaty of reconciliation of 17 September 1584, which was signed by Ghent and Farnese, required Ghent to pay a tax of 24 million Flemish deniers groten. The city of Ghent arranged for the collection of this sum in two rounds (at the end of 1584 and in January 1585). Assessors appointed by Farnese estimated the wealth, social status and involvement in the rebellion per family head to calculate the taxation. Compared to many other taxations and punishments (Caroline Concession), the reconciliation tax was very high and weighed heavily on a great many of the citizens.<sup>436</sup> All these elements show that an immediate recovery after 1584 was far from straightforward.

### Collecting an income

Once again, just as with the analysis of the accounts for the period 1560-1577, it is important to keep in mind that the accounts do not reveal everything. For example, a more or less informal circle could have generated a continued, but unregistered income for the church during the period of Calvinist rule. A relatively large part of the income registered in the ordinary churchwarden accounts of 1583-1585 – 86 pounds of the total income of 229 pounds or 37% – was in fact a reserve, supposedly generated in previous years. As accounts are missing, it is hard to tell where this reserve came from. A plausible explanation is that it came from rents for properties owned by St James. If the years for which the accounts are missing generated the same income from rents as 1581-1582 and 1582-1583 did, then an income of 82 pounds could have been collected between 1578 and 1583.

The first remarkable feature of the churchwarden accounts after 1583 is the growing importance of the category called "miscellaneous income". The ordinary income categories, which appeared annually in the accounts, were rents and annuities, income from funeralia, seating, collections of alms, testaments and anniversaries (masses funded for the dead). Miscellaneous income was a catch-all term for forms of income that did not fit into the ordinary income categories. Rents and annuities were usually the most stable form of ordinary income as they came from financial structures linked with property and functioned almost independently of the church.<sup>437</sup> Income from funeralia came from the sale of torches (although not all the torches were used at funerals), palls, tombstones and

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<sup>436</sup> Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 394-99.

<sup>437</sup> Kuys, 'Churchwardens' Accounts and Parish Finances in the Netherlands during the Late Middle Ages', 101.

the ringing of bells. Seating was another way for the church to earn money; wealthy men and women paid for specific seating in the church. More direct ways of collecting money were listed in the category "*Ontfanck van aporten ten altaere ende muenich wyne, ende ommeganhen te hoochtijde bij de keerckmeesters ghehaelt*". This was the money collected during mass and sermons in the church.<sup>438</sup>

Figure 7 shows the portion of miscellaneous income in the total income of St James. It reveals that this diverse income made little difference in the decades before the Calvinist Republic. Clearly, after 1584 the parish was finding new ways of collecting money that did not fit into the ordinary income categories. During the early 1560s the miscellaneous income category would sometimes include specific revenues from burial practices, but this was not the case after 1584. Then, the income from burial practices was listed together with other ordinary income. This development proves again that the rise in total income after 1584 was the result of an absolute rise in income and cannot simply be attributed to inflation. The fact that there is an extra set of accounts for 1584-1586 which registered a large income to pay for repairs is already evidence of this.

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<sup>438</sup> For a detailed study on the collection of income for the cathedral, see: Wim H. Vroom, *Financing Cathedral Building in the Middle Ages. The Generosity of the Faithful* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010); For the historical background of the "apport", see: A. Viaene, 'Appoort. Een Term Uit de Kerkelijke Boekhouding in Vlaanderen 1300-1600', *Annales de La Société d'Emulation de Bruges: Revue Trimestrielle Pour L'étude de L'histoire et Des Antiquités de La Flandre*, 87-101, 103 (1966): 99-101.

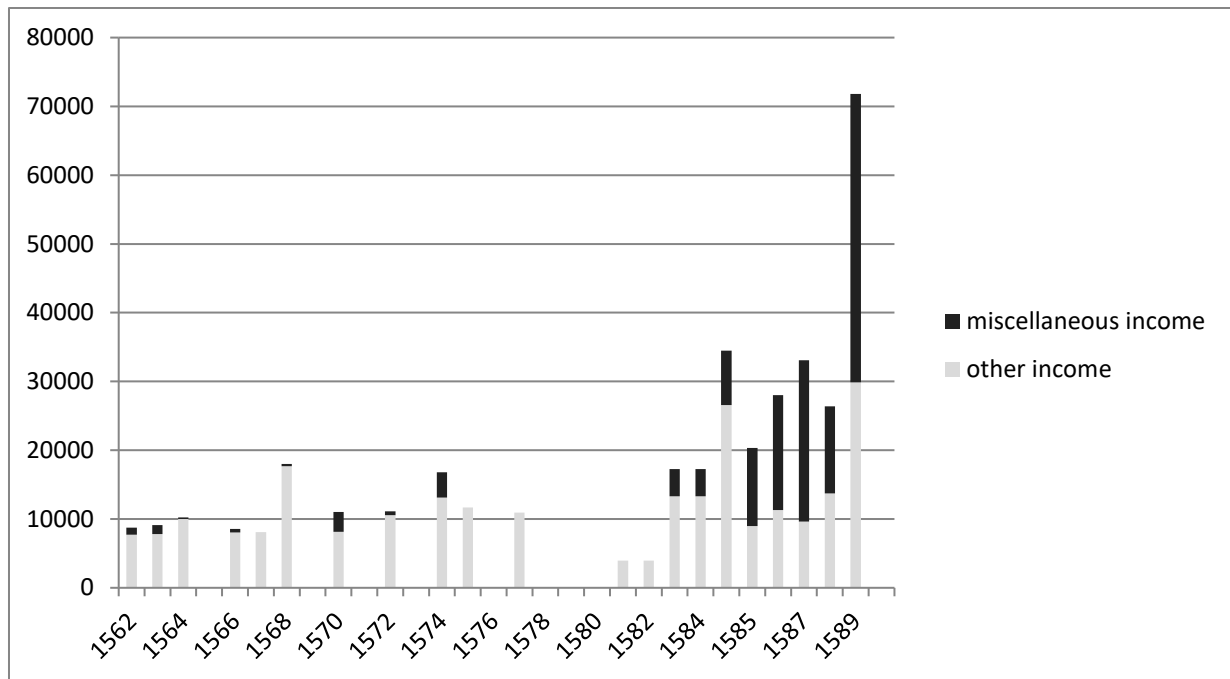


Figure 7 Graph portion of miscellaneous income in the total income of the ordinary churchwarden accounts of St James, in Flemish deniers groten per year (1562-1590)<sup>439</sup>

Further analysis of this miscellaneous income clarifies what caused its rise. The magistracy and guilds, but above all the parishioners, donated generously on various occasions during this period. In particular, they contributed through the offertory boxes (*offerblok*), gifts (sometimes in a general collection and sometimes individually) and by extending loans through the churchwardens (see fig 8). Offerings through the offertory box were not mentioned in the previous accounts of St James, which seems to imply that this was a new way of donating to the church. However, as offertory boxes were already widespread in churches during the Middle Ages, this system of giving was known.<sup>440</sup> Van Vaernewijck also mentions the destruction and theft of the content of three of these boxes in St James during the first iconoclasm. One of the offertory boxes was for the poor, another for the altar of the Sweet Name of Jesus and the third was “den block van der keercken”.<sup>441</sup> This most likely was for the churchwardens. Maybe the sum of money found in this offertory box before 1584 might not have been substantial enough to grant a special mention in the churchwarden accounts, and the sum was added to the

<sup>439</sup> For this graph the income of account 1583-1585 was divided in two, half the amount was put at 1583-1584, the other half at 1584-1585.

<sup>440</sup> Kuys, ‘Churchwardens’ Accounts and Parish Finances in the Netherlands during the Late Middle Ages’, 100; Vroom, *Financing Cathedral Building in the Middle Ages. The Generosity of the Faithful*, 174.

<sup>441</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 207 (I).

gatherings?<sup>442</sup> Another possible explanation is that previously the income from the offertory boxes was used by the churchwardens for direct, smaller payments that were not registered in the accounts.<sup>443</sup>

After 1584 a separate box must have been installed especially for the churchwardens to collect money for repairs. It became a popular way of donating to the church. The first ordinary accounts after the Calvinist Republic reveal that the offerings alone totalled 16 pounds, increasing to 31 pounds in the subsequent accounts. During the following years it fluctuated but remained in the region of 30 pounds. In the accounts of 1589-1590, the offerings reached a peak of almost 45 pounds. Besides the offerings, the church contracted loans with several parishioners. This was also a relatively new practice that had not been registered in the accounts before 1584. The principle of contracting loans or selling annuities, however, was a well-known technique in this period for obtaining money in the short term.<sup>444</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> For a case study that illustrates the various roles of these income categories and the search for new ways to raise money for the reconstruction of the church, see: French, 'Rebuilding St. Margaret's: Parish Involvement and Community Action in Late Medieval Westminster', 150-52; For an example of the division of responsibility and income between the clergy and the laity, see: French, 'Competing for Space: Medieval Religious Conflict in the Monastic-Parochial Church at Dunster', 223-32.

<sup>443</sup> Viaene, 'Appoort. Een Term Uit de Kerkelijke Boekhouding in Vlaanderen 1300-1600', 100.

<sup>444</sup> Other parishes in Ghent and beyond also made use of loans to finance building projects and loans were not uncommon for city governments. See: Vandeputte, 'De Pest Te Gent 1568-1640. Bijdrage Tot de Studie van de Pest-Epidemieën in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden.', 281, 310; French, 'Rebuilding St. Margaret's: Parish Involvement and Community Action in Late Medieval Westminster', 154; Kuys, 'Churchwardens' Accounts and Parish Finances in the Netherlands during the Late Middle Ages', 98, 101; For more information on the use of real estate and annuities in the middle ages and early modern period see Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 457-77; Katia Hancké, 'Confiscaties Als Politiek Wapen in Intern Stedelijke Conflicten Casus: Gent, 1477-1492', *Handelingen Der Maatschappij Voor Geschiedenis En Oudheidkunde Te Gent* 49 (1995): 197-220; Marc Boone et al., *Immobilienmarkt, fiscaliteit en sociale ongelijkheid te Gent, 1483-1503* (Kortrijk-Heule: UGA, 1981), <http://lib.ugent.be/catalog/rug01:000703091>; Marc Boone, 'Systèmes Fiscaux Dans Les Principautés à Forte Urbanisation Des Pays-Bas Méridionaux (Flandre, Brabant, Hainaut, Pays de Liège) Au Bas Moyen Âge (XIVe-XVIe Siècle)', in *Fiscal Systems in the European Economy from the 13th to the 18th Centuries*, vol. 39, Atti Delle 'Settimane Di Studi' e Altri Convegni, II (Firenze: Firenze University Press, 2008), 657-83.



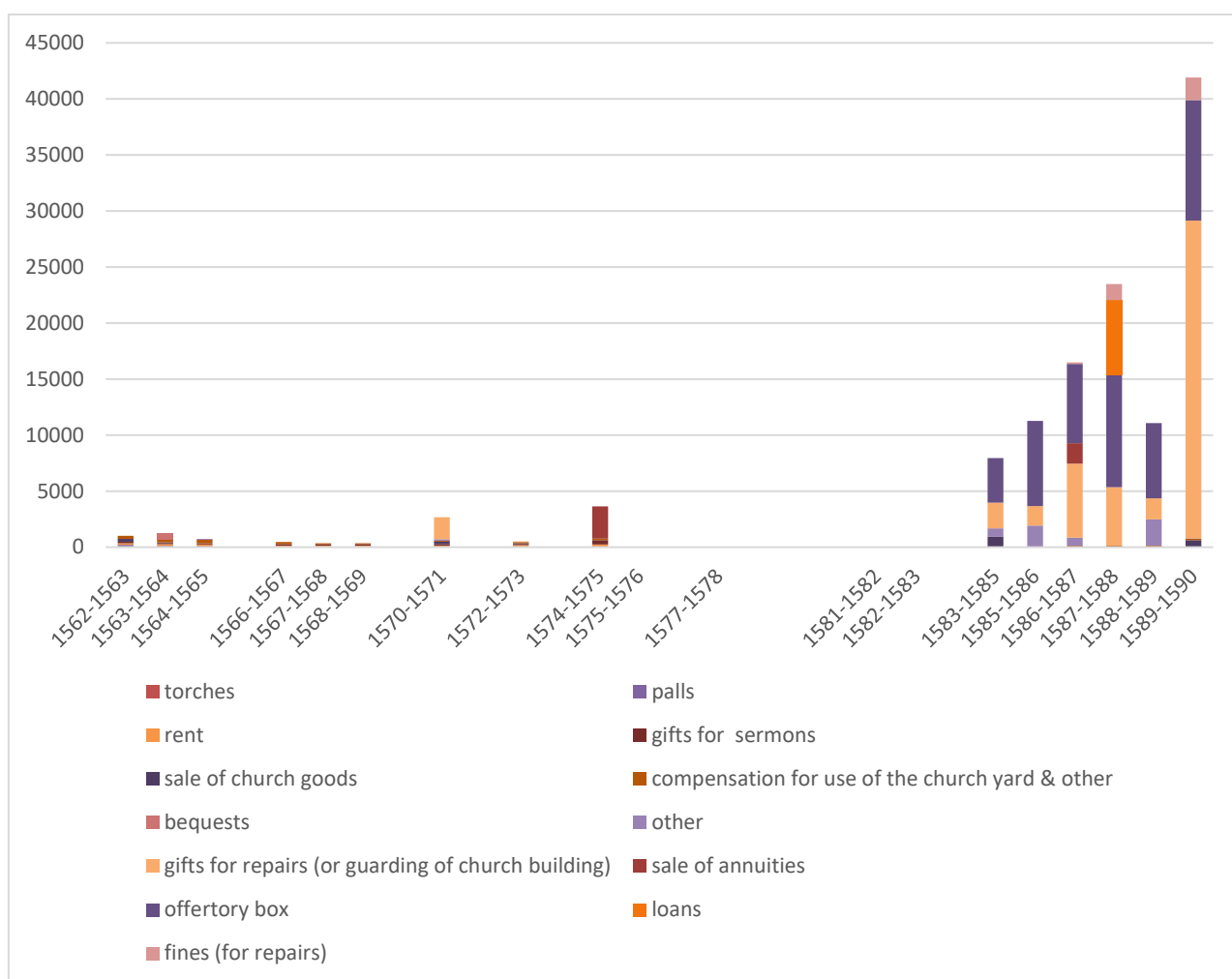


Figure 8 Graph analysis of the miscellaneous income category in the ordinary churchwarden accounts in Flemish deniers groten (1562-1590).

The graph in figure 8 illustrates how the components of the miscellaneous income category changed with time. Although there were specific categories in the accounts for items such as torches, before 1578 the sale of torches and palls, as well as bequests and rents, were often placed in this category of miscellaneous income. A small recurrent item was income that came from the use of the churchyard by artisans. Jacob Heys used it for twisting rope and also paid for the barely which he probably reaped on the churchyard.<sup>445</sup> After 1584 these forms of income paled in comparison with the absolute increase in miscellaneous income from the revenues from the offertory box, individual gifts and collections for repairs, fines and loans. Furthermore, it is important to note that not all collections and loans were placed in this category. Sometimes a separate category was used for loans and the first large collection (see below) that took place in 1584 was put into a separate set of accounts.

<sup>445</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacob Gent, no 346, fo 10 ro.

It was not only miscellaneous income that increased. The churchwarden accounts after 1583 reveal that the ordinary income categories, such as *apporten*, *ommeganghen* (alms collections within the church) and funerals, also grew. The rise in these income categories might be linked to the savings made by parishioners in the period that they were not allowed to contribute to Catholic life. However, the shift to a higher total income for the church and the increased generosity of the parish as a whole cannot be explained by savings alone.

The separately numbered accounts exclusively for the repairs to St James in 1584-1586 (not included in the graphs above), show that this period of increased gifts from parishioners was also the time that two large collections were held and many more loans were contracted with parishioners. This further highlights the findings based on the ordinary accounts that the restoration of St James took off immediately thanks to the involvement of its parishioners. Figure 9 shows the evolution of the income that could be used to finance repairs. It combines the revenues found in the ordinary accounts (including the category miscellaneous income) with those in the separate repairs account, thus including the large collections and loans of 1584 and 1585. As there is an overlap of the dates, the amounts in these special accounts (1584-1586) were added to the amounts in the ordinary accounts of 1583-1585. According to the dates of the transactions, the collections in the special accounts of 1584-1586 in fact preceded (most transactions in) the accounts of 1583-1585, which were often dated 1586. Overall, the amounts shown for 1583-1585 are for two years, albeit it 1584-1586 rather than 1583-1585. In the graph, however, I follow more or less the official dates of the accounts. I left out the more stable income categories, such as rents and income from funerals, to maintain a good overview and focus on the most likely source of finance for the church repairs.

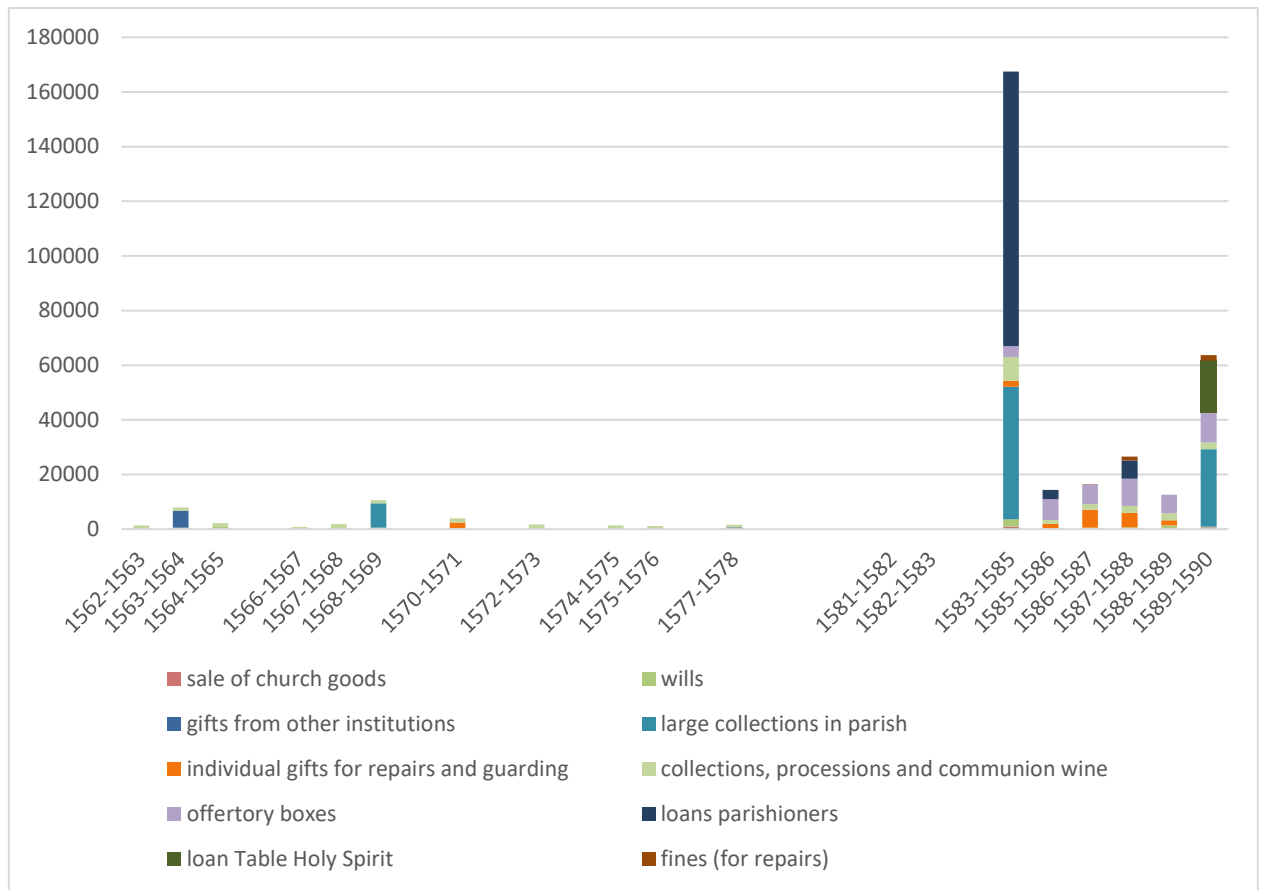


Figure 9 Graph direct income coming from parishioners and church institutions for the churchwardens of St James in Flemish deniers groten (including the special accounts exclusively for repairs) (1562-1590)

Again, the graph illustrates how the end of the Calvinist Republic brought enormous change. The first two years saw the loans and collections held among the parishioners bring in the largest amounts of income. Occasional gifts from parishioners and large contributions and loans from the Table of the Holy Spirit and the brotherhood of Our Lady on the Rade (meaning lightbeam or grill) were other contributions that occasionally boosted the income in the following period. The first collection of alms registered in the separate accounts of 1584-1586 took place in November 1584, thus within two months of Ghent capitulating to Farnese. A second one was held in September 1585. The priests, churchwardens, Holy Spirit masters and other parish dignitaries went from door to door across the whole parish to ask for alms to finance the repairs to the parish church, just like after the iconoclasm of 1566. Again, all contributors were registered in the accounts, this time sorted by street. It is not clear who instigated the collection, but most likely it was the churchwardens in charge of the church building. The churchwardens in this period were Geeraert de Scheppere and Jan Jooris, and the Holy Spirit masters were Pieter Dhauwe, Jan De Keysere, Jan de Stoppelare, Pieter Vanderhaghen and Philips

Vanderhaghen.<sup>446</sup> We will come across some of these names again in the discussion on the parishioners who donated to the collections in 1568, 1584 and 1585.

The first collection of 1584 brought in a total of 147 pounds groten or 35,280 deniers and was donated by 277 people, while the second one of 1585 raised 55 pounds groten or 13,200 deniers and came from 214 people.<sup>447</sup> Compared to the collection of 1568, when St James raised 37 pounds groten (8880 deniers), these collections were thus more successful, even though fewer parishioners contributed. Most of the people who were mentioned as donors in the second collection of 1585 had also donated to the first one. In most cases, their offering was smaller in the second round. However, about 90 people listed as donors in the second collection had not offered money in the first round. So, altogether, there were 367 different people who donated money for repairs to their parish church during one or both of these collections. In the aftermath of the first iconoclasm there had been 465 donors (98 more) who had given 12 deniers on average, a little less than the daily wage of a mason's journeyman in Ghent. During the first collection after the fall of the Calvinist regime, the average amount offered was 127 deniers, and during the second one it was a little more than 60 deniers. These are high averages, given that in 1585 the daily wage of a mason's journeyman in Ghent was on average 34 deniers.<sup>448</sup> The average gift donated in the first collection of 1584 was thus equivalent to 3.7 days' wages and in the second collection of 1585 it was 1.76 days' wages. People thus gave proportionately more during these two collections than in the collection of 1568.

Furthermore, it is important to note that purchasing power was extremely low in this period. Dambruyne has calculated that in 1584-1585 a mason's journeyman with an average family needed at least 66.6% of his income to pay for grain and the rent for his house. The situation deteriorated in following year (1585-1586), as the income needed for this expenditure was 104.7%. Things were even worse for apprentices. In 1584-1585 they already needed 126.4% of their income for a basic livelihood and in 1585-1586 this rose to 203%. In comparison, in 1568 the figure was around 45% for journeymen and around 65% for apprentices. Thus, although a larger group of people were able to contribute more generously in 1568, the difficult economic situation after the Calvinist Republic would have prevented a large group of workmen from donating money to the church. This might

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<sup>446</sup> Somers, *Inventaris van Het Oud Archief van de Kerkfabriek En Parochie Sint-Jacobs Te Gent Met Inbegrip van de Parochiale Instellingen*. (1231) 1302-1885, 41-47.

<sup>447</sup> RAG, OKA Sint-Jacobs Gent, no 25, fo 1 vo – fo 16 ro.

<sup>448</sup> Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 837, 838. The daily wage is based on the annual income, which combines the daily wages earned in summer and winter.

partly explain the lower number of contributors in 1584 and 1585, but it makes the results of the collection all the more surprising.<sup>449</sup>

The lower number of contributors can also be explained by demography. In 1571-1572 Ghent had about 42,000 people and the population experienced a period of growth during the Calvinist Republic, but by 1590 it had fallen to 27,000 inhabitants. This means that about 15,000 people left Ghent in the period 1584-1590. The emigration did not reach the levels seen in Antwerp, where about half of the population (40,000 people) left the city after the reconciliation, but it was substantial.<sup>450</sup> So even though the parish comprised fewer people than ever, it still collected a much larger income than in the years before Calvinist rule. Looking back to the rather paralysing effects of the iconoclasm of 1566 on the parish, the reaction of the parish after the fall of the Calvinist Republic seems very different. At least some of the remaining parishioners were strongly involved in the repairs to their church and more willing to give money than the larger group of parishioners had been 20 years earlier.

General collections, carried out by prominent parishioners, would have put pressure on the parishioners to give more, especially those with a dubious past. Many would have wanted to prove themselves to be true Catholics, but not all. Furthermore, there was less political pressure on Calvinists in 1584 than in 1567. Farnese gave the people of Ghent time to decide whether they would join the Catholic Church again or leave the city. In contrast to the period when Alva ruled the Low Countries, Calvinists were not in immediate danger because of their beliefs.<sup>451</sup> Another finding is that parishioners did not only give generously when the donor could be identified publicly or was registered. Evidence for this can be found in the large amounts of money placed anonymously in the offertory boxes, which were only mentioned in the accounts after the Calvinist Republic. After 1584, apart from the few door-to-door collections of alms in the parish, the offertory boxes generated the most income for the church.

Thus some of the parishioners chose relatively freely to contribute to the restoration of their parish church. This strong reaction of believers after the fall of the Calvinist Republic can be explained in the light of other developments. Pollmann has noted how many Catholics in the southern Low Countries became more militant after 1585. Restoration of the Catholic community suddenly became a priority. The loss of the right of Catholics to live according to their beliefs during the seven-year period of Calvinist

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<sup>449</sup> Dambruyne, 844-45.

<sup>450</sup> Johan Dambruyne, *Mensen En Centen. Het 16de-Eeuwse Gent in Demografisch En Economisch Perspectief*, vol. 2001, *Verhandelingen Der Maatschappij Voor Geschiedenis En Oudheidkunde Te Gent*, XXVI (Ghent: Maatschappij voor geschiedenis en oudheidkunde, 2001), 87-89.

<sup>451</sup> Soen, 'De Reconciliatie van "Ketters" in de Zestiende-Eeuwse Nederlanden (1520-1590)'.

rule strengthened their sense of Catholic identity once Calvinism was defeated.<sup>452</sup> The regime had not only prohibited public Catholic life, but also desacralized many of their traditional church buildings and objects. Coming face to face with the possibility of losing the right to live Catholic lives, people became radicalized.<sup>453</sup> The political-religious victory of Catholicism, which followed the arrival of Farnese, finally gave them the chance they had hoped for to make a new, confident statement about Catholicism.

Furthermore, after 1584 many Catholics who had left to escape the outbreaks of violence and insecurity in the preceding decade returned to their homeland.<sup>454</sup> These returning citizens had often been in contact with a more radicalized form of Catholicism in the refugee centres. Janssen has illustrated how many of these refugees were important agents in the process of Counter-Reformation.<sup>455</sup> The generosity of the parishioners in St James fits in with this image of a renewed sense of Catholic identity after 1584, but it also shows that parishioners who had remained in Ghent during the Troubles were agents of change. The focus on the restoration of the parish church was a logical first step towards a more self-confident Catholicism. The support of military and political forces led by Alexander Farnese gave them the confidence to believe that this time Catholicism would indeed prevail.

It is not clear how the other parishes of Ghent coped with the restoration works. The other large central parishes probably followed a similar course to St James. However, the small chapter and parish of St Pharahild, which had almost no parishioners, did not recover.<sup>456</sup> The more rural parish of St Martin's could not be used for a long time. Serious restoration works were only started in 1607 and some repairs had to wait for over a decade to be completed.<sup>457</sup> Other cities took different paths. The restoration of St

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<sup>452</sup> Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635*.

<sup>453</sup> Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, 183–84.

<sup>454</sup> H. Verlinden, 'Beleg En Val in 1584', in *Het Eind van Een Rebelse Droom. Opstellen over Het Calvinistisch Bewind Te Gent (1577-1584) En de Terugkeer van de Stad Onder de Gehoorzaamheid van de Koning van Spanje (17 September 1584)*, ed. Johan Decavele (Ghent, 1984), 103–12; Johan Decavele, 'Gent, Calvinistisch En Republikeins Strijdcentrum in de Nederlandse Opstand (1577-1584)', in *Willem van Oranje 1584-1984. Herdenking Door de KAB* (Brussels: Koninklijke academie voor wetenschappen, letteren en schone kunsten van België, 1984), 77–78; Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, 183 (II). It is important to emphasize that Catholicism as a belief was not forbidden or persecuted during the Ghent Republic. However, after a short period of tolerance during which certain churches were appointed for Catholics, churches were closed for Catholic services and priests were forbidden to celebrate mass.

<sup>455</sup> Janssen, 'The Counter-Reformation of the Refugee: Exile and the Shaping of Catholic Militancy in the Dutch Revolt'; Janssen, 'The Exile Experience'.

<sup>456</sup> Annelies Somers and Michal Bauwens, 'The Institutional Nature of Parishes and the Restoration of the Church after Iconoclasm: The Case of St. James and St. Pharahild in Ghent (1566-1614)', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'histoire* 93, no. 3–4 (2015): 669–91.

<sup>457</sup> Liesbeth De Frenne, 'Verzoening En Herstel van Het Vorstelijk Gezag. De Aartshertogen Albrecht En Isabella En de Stad Gent (1598-1621)', *Handelingen Der Maatschappij Voor Geschiedenis En Oudheidkunde Te Gent* 60 (2006): 263.

Andrew's in Antwerp seemed less urgent to both magistrates and parishioners, especially in comparison with the churches of the mendicant orders, which received substantial donations. St Andrew's was still in need of repairs in 1608 and the transept of the church would only be erected in 1663. The restoration of the high choir in St James in Antwerp also started fairly late (in 1602), while the construction of the vaults, ambulatory and chapels were not completed until 1656. In contrast, during this same period the Jesuits in Antwerp took just seven years to erect a brand new baroque church from scratch. Originally dedicated to Ignatius of Loyola, the church was renamed St Carolus Boromeo in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Gifts from the magistracy, king Philip IV and the archdukes Albert and Isabella aided the construction, but the collections held among the citizens of Antwerp provided an even larger contribution. The Jesuits were not the only ones building, but they did have the most prestigious building project of that time. The context of the city of Antwerp made it harder for parishioners to sufficiently support their parish church, because their money was also needed by other ecclesiastical institutions. Nevertheless, parish churches in Antwerp were supported by their parishioners. Jeffrey Muller has illustrated how wealthy parishioners supported the reconstruction of the church of St James in Antwerp, though financial intervention from the city council was still necessary.<sup>458</sup> Thus the differences between the restoration processes in the various towns and parishes do not necessarily illustrate different religious affiliations or attitudes. The institutional differences between parishes played a crucial role, alongside external factors such as the timing of Jesuits settling in a town and building projects of other religious institutions.<sup>459</sup>

Even though the restoration works in some parish churches started immediately in Ghent, this does not mean that Catholic rites and traditions returned straightaway. Jens Lesage's research on Catholic processions in Ghent has shown that the first general procession did not take place until April 1585. Furthermore, there was no striking increase in the number of processions in the following years and neither was there a

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<sup>458</sup> Alfons K. L. Thijs, *Van Geuzenstad Tot Katholiek Bolwerk. Antwerpen En de Contrareformatie* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1990), 78–80; Jeffrey M. Muller, 'Institution and Framework: The New Chapter of Canons and Its Choir Space in the St. Jacob's Church, Antwerp', in *Sponsors of the Past. Flemish Art and Patronage 1550-1700. Proceedings of the Symposium Organized at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven December, 14-15, 2001*, ed. Hans Vlieghe and Katlijne Van der Stighelen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001), 118; Somers and Bauwens, 'The Institutional Nature of Parishes and the Restoration of the Church after Iconoclasm: The Case of St. James and St. Pharahild in Ghent (1566-1614)'; Muller, *St. Jacob's Antwerp Art and Counter Reformation in Rubens's Parish Church*.

<sup>459</sup> De Frenne, 'Verzoening En Herstel van Het Vorstelijk Gezag. De Aartshertogen Albrecht En Isabella En de Stad Gent (1598-1621)', 263–64. In Ghent, the Jesuits started their expensive building project later (after the restoration of the central parish churches). As a result, they were the ones having to beg for money. After hearing the Ghent Jesuits' complaints in 1608, the archdukes resorted to demanding the levy of a special tax in Ghent to fund the building project.

change in the content of these processions.<sup>460</sup> Jens Ranson came to a similar conclusion for Bruges. The number of processions after 1584 was relatively small, and in 1584 and 1585 only one general procession took place. Ranson believes this was because the authorities feared there would be riots as there were still many Protestants in the city.<sup>461</sup>

### 3.5 The donors

There is no doubt that parishioners played an important role in the restoration, but who were these people who cherished their church so much? The registration of the collections in the accounts of 1584-1586 provides more insight into the identity of the generous parishioners of St James. First, there is a connection with the collection of 16 years earlier. At least 65 contributors to the 1568 collection were also found on the list of donors for the collections of 1584 and 1585. In addition, 9 widows of men who had contributed to the 1568 collection were mentioned in the records of the later collections.

Women were registered as donors in 1584 and 1585, but they remained a minority. The first collection after the end of the Calvinist regime recorded 39 women as contributors and the second one noted 29. During the collection of 1568, 70 women had contributed. As with the first collection, the majority of the women in the later collections too were widows. Others were registered as the wife (*dhuusvrouw*) or daughter of a man who was probably not there at the time of the collection, and a few seemed to be wealthy single women or religious women. The principle of registering only the head of the family was thus also used for the collections after 1568.

Just as in 1568, many prominent men who held positions as aldermen or churchwardens contributed to the collections of 1584 and 1585. The aldermen included Pieter van Ackere, Jan Bauwens, François Borluut, Jan de Scheppere, Lievin van de Vivere, Adriaen Meganck and Jacques Vanderhaghen. The following 20 contributors were, had been or would become churchwardens or Holy Spirit masters at St James: Gillis van Ackere, Pieter van Ackere, Anthonis Baeke, Gillis Callant, Joos de Cock, Laureyns Helaut, Jan Gheerolfs, François de Clerck, Jacques Vanderhaghen, Pieter Vanderhaghen, Jan Dhollandere, Jacob van Larebeke, Loys Vanderlinden, Adriaen Meganck, Octaviaan

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<sup>460</sup> Jens Lesage, “‘Processie Generale Ende Solempnele’: Generale Processies in Gent (1556-1598) Binnen Het Kader van de Nederlandse Opstand, de Reformatie En de Contrareformatie. Een Contextueel Overzicht En Kwantitatieve Analyse’ (Master’s Thesis, Ghent, Ghent University, 2015), 100, 120–25.

<sup>461</sup> Jens Ranson, ‘Brugge Na de Reconciliatie Met Filips II. De Rol van Het Stadsbestuur in de Constructie van de Katholieke Stadsgemeenschap (1584-1598)’ (Master’s Thesis, Ghent, Ghent University, 2010), 116–18, 57–63.



Parmentier, Jan van Welle, Jan de Meyere, Joos van de Moortele, Zegher Vanderstraeten and Jan van Tombeelee.<sup>462</sup> We might expect these prominent men or their widows to give on average larger amounts for the collection. This is true for the collection of 1584, where the average donation was 127 deniers. The parishioners who had been aldermen or their widows gave on average about 190 deniers for this collection, while the men who were or had been churchwardens or Holy Spirit masters at St James gave on average over 348 deniers, or almost three times the overall average across the parish. Clearly, because of the special position of the parish church in these men's careers, an exemplary gift would have been expected. In fact, other research shows that churchwardens in many parishes were seen to provide financial aid for the parish.<sup>463</sup> Both groups (aldermen and parish officials), however, "only" gave 60 deniers on average during the collection of 1585, which was about the overall average. This lower average might reflect the depth of the economic crisis that took hold that year. We have already seen that the wages of a mason's journeyman were not enough to live on because of soaring food prices. As a result of the economic crisis, fewer people could give money to the church. Those who had donated to the first collection also gave less the second time around. Other collections (for the poor and for building other ecclesiastical institutions) or loans probably also drained the resources of the more wealthy parishioners.

### Geographical analysis of gifts

The listing of the streets in the accounts follows a geographical logic that suggests the collectors took the exact same route the churchwardens took during the collection of alms. Both collections started in Steendam and then took in the streets in the south of the parish (Houtbriel, Nieuwstraat, etc.).<sup>464</sup> Next came the western streets (Onderstraat, Eenhoornstraat, etc.), with Langemunt leading the collectors to the area of Vrijdagmarkt and then the northern part of the parish. The second collection in 1585 more or less followed the same route as the first, but the sequence of streets taken at the end (the north of the parish) was mixed up. This is evidence that the listing in the accounts reflects the route taken by the collectors, rather than a fixed model.

As the donors were listed per street, it is possible to link social differences (and perhaps generosity) with different areas of the parish. During the collection of 1584, only 50 people gave less than 20 deniers. These less generous or less wealthy parishioners were

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<sup>462</sup> Somers, *Inventaris van Het Oud Archief van de Kerkfabriek En Parochie Sint-Jacobs Te Gent Met Inbegrip van de Parochiale Instellingen*. (1231) 1302-1885, 41–48.

<sup>463</sup> For the situation in England, see: J.S. Craig, 'Co-Operation and Initiatives: Elizabethan Churchwardens and the Parish Accounts of Mildenhall', *Social History* 18, no. 3 (1993): 364–65; French, 'Rebuilding St. Margaret's: Parish Involvement and Community Action in Late Medieval Westminster', 154.

<sup>464</sup> The in this collection mentioned Nieuwstraat (nieustraete) doesn't exist anymore.

more likely to live, on average, in Cathelijnestraat, Saaisteeg and Crommewale. Others lived in Onderstaat, Nieuwstraat, Langemunt, Steendam, Paisysterstraat and Cammestraat, where many of the bigger donors also lived. This spread was also visible in the collection of 1585, although the 32 parishioners who offered less than 20 deniers in that year were even more dispersed over the parish. This is not surprising as St James was a socially mixed parish and the very poor would not have contributed to this collection for the reasons explained above.<sup>465</sup>



Figure 10 Aerial view of the parish showing the amounts collected per street in the collections of 1584 and 1585.<sup>466</sup>

<sup>465</sup> See discussions in chapter 1 and 2 on the economic background of the parish and eventual links with “gheuserie”Blockmans, ‘Peilingen Naar de Sociale Structuren Te Gent Tijdens de Late 15e Eeuw’; Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 94–95, 637–38, 756–57.

<sup>466</sup> I have only highlighted the streets mentioned in the list, but it is possible that the collection area was larger (extensions, side roads of these streets) or smaller than what I have indicated. Furthermore, some streets



Figure 11 Aerial view of the parish showing the average gift collected per street in the collections of 1584 and 1585. (Average of those who donated to the church, those who did not contribute were not included)<sup>467</sup>

have changed considerably over time, and as this overview is based on a modern layout of Ghent with only some basic modifications, the results cannot be indicated with precision. It indicates the total amount collected per street. Red: amount collected between 9000 and 10000 deniers. Orange: between 5000 and 6000 deniers. Yellow: between 3000 and 4000 deniers. Light Green: between 2000 and 3000 deniers. Dark Green: between 1000 and 2000 deniers. Light Blue: between 500 and 1000 deniers. Dark Blue: between 0 and 500 deniers.

<sup>467</sup> I have only highlighted the streets mentioned in the list, but it is possible that the collection area was larger (extensions, side roads of these streets) or smaller than what I have indicated. Furthermore, some streets have changed considerably over time, and as this overview is based on a modern layout of Ghent with only some basic modifications, the results cannot be indicated with precision. The map indicates the average amount given per donator in a given street. Red: average amount given between 200 and 225 deniers. No average donations between 150 and 200. Orange: between 125 and 150 deniers. Yellow: between 100 and 125 deniers. Light Green: between 75 and 100 deniers. Dark Green: between 50 and 75 deniers. Light Blue: between 25 and 50 deniers. Dark Blue: between 0 and 50 deniers.

Table 2 Number of donors, average gift and total collected per street in the collections of 1584 and 1585.<sup>468</sup>

Street	Number of donors	Average gift/street	Total gifts/street
Koningstraat	11	225	2475
Paisyserstraat (side street of Vrijdagmarkt)	19	200	3804
Lijnwaetrink (Oude Vlasmarkt, off Vrijdagmarkt)	7	138	964
Baudelostraat	6	131	788
Vlasmarkt (Nieuwe Vlasmarkt)	18	130	2347
Plaatsken (Gaerenplaetsken, now Anseeleplein)	20	126	2526
Steendam	75	126	9425
Minnemansstraat (side street of Vrijdagmarkt)	4	120	480
Vrijdagmarkt	48	118	5667
Waaistraat	26	114	2973
Cammestraat	37	104	3848
Gracht (Ottogracht and Sint-Jacobsgracht)	11	87	956
Saaisteeg (Schepenhuisstraat)	13	85	1102
Bessemmaert (east side of Groot-Kanonplein)	3	80	240
Varkensmarkt (Vlasmarkt)	13	70	908
Area around cemetery	10	67	670
Houtbriel	8	67	532
Onderstraat	28	58	1626
Langemunt	48	54	2572
Zuivelsteeg (Meerseniersstraat)	16	48	768
Nieuwpoort (old demolished street north of today's Nieuwpoortstraat)	1	40	40
Cathelijnenstraat	14	39	549
Eenhoornstraat (? Mssn Wandelsteghe/Serpentstraat on the corner of Eenhoorn?)	17	37	630
Wannekens aarde (Groot-Kanonplein)	9	34	308
Oude Vest	3	17	51
Crommewale (extension of (Otto)gracht)	8	10	81
Wolfstraat (side street of Vrijdagmarkt)	2	7	14

Still, there are some interesting differences in the average amounts given by donors in specific streets. I analysed the geography of the offerings after combining the data of the two collections (1584 and 1585). As I did not exclude the doubles (people that gave in both collections), the averages used represent average separate amounts given in the two collections, rather than average totals given per person. Some streets did not add much to the total as only a few people, if any, donated. Examples of streets where only a few people offered money are Nieuwpoort, Oude Vest and Wolfstraat. The streets where the

<sup>468</sup> The colours correspond to the colours showing the location of the street in the figures above.

largest numbers of people donated were Steendam (75), Langemunt (48), Vrijdagmarkt (48), Cammestraat (37) and Onderstraat (26). Steendam, Vrijdagmarkt and Cammestraat were also where the highest absolute amounts were collected, while the above-mentioned streets with the fewest donors also gave the least. However, on average, the most generous donors lived in other areas of the parish: Koningstraat (on average 225 deniers per gift), Paisyserstraat (200), Lijnwaetrink (137), Baudelostraat (131) and Vlasmarkt (130). The lowest averages were found in Oude Vest (17), Crommewale (10) and Wolfstraat (6.75).<sup>469</sup> There were thus large differences in the donations of the various streets of the parish. The illustrations above give an interesting overview of the generosity of the parishioners of St James in this period.

From Willem Blockmans' study on the socio-economic stratification in the parish at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, we know that Vrijdagmarkt, Steendam, Langemunt and Onderstraat were home to the largest number of wealthy people. The area north of Vrijdagmarkt was quite a poor area. Although this was almost a century earlier, the geographical spread of the wealth would not have changed drastically, as the homes for the more wealthy remained fixed.<sup>470</sup> Dambruyne provides more up-to-date data. In 1571-1572, the 20 most expensive streets in Ghent (based on the value of the houses) included Langemunt, Meerseniersstraat (Zuivelsteeg) and Vrijdagmarkt.<sup>471</sup> The wealth of people living in Onderstraat too would probably not have been much less than those living there in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Based on the location of the guildhouses in 1540, we know the work site of prominent guilds such as the brewers, and many other guilds too, including the coopers, woodcutters (*houtzagers*), fellmongers (*lammerwerkers*), old cloth dealers (*oudkleerkopers*), carpenters (*schrijnwerkers*) and furriers. Of course, the fact that the former guildhouses were located at a certain place does not mean that all their members lived in the same street, but the guilds and their members were usually concentrated in certain areas.<sup>472</sup> Before 1540, the brewers had had one of the most expensive guildhouses,

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<sup>469</sup> During the collection in Paisyserstraat the parish also received a gift from Ghent city council. This sum of 6 pounds or 1440 deniers was not included when calculating the average donations.

<sup>470</sup> Blockmans, 'Peilingen Naar de Sociale Structuren Te Gent Tijdens de Late 15e Eeuw', 221, 231, 247. The data used do not present the wealth per street in that period, but the number of households that paid (and thus were considered sufficiently wealthy to pay) 1 guilder or 40 Flemish deniers in a taxation round in 1492-1494. This fixed tax equalled the amount of house tax paid by the rather well-to-do citizens of that time. This group of taxpayers would have had varying degrees of wealth, but this is not illustrated in this graph. So we should not compare these numbers with the totals of the money collected per street, but rather with the number of parishioners who contributed to the collection for the church. We might expect that those who were able to pay the fixed tax would also be able to give a donation to the church. However, demographic and economic changes may have affected the purchasing power and number of parishioners in the various streets.

<sup>471</sup> Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 787-90.

<sup>472</sup> Dambruyne, 756-58.



and their high status and wealth is confirmed for 1584 as well by the reconciliation tax paid by 49 brewers. This tax was based on their wealth being valued at between 2001 and 4000 deniers. There were various guilds in St James's parish, but only the mercers (*meerseniers*) and tanners, who operated in the area of Vrijdagmarkt, also fell in this wealth category. The fellmongers, second-hand clothes dealers and coopers who worked near Onderstraat were assessed, for taxation purposes, as belonging to the wealth category of 1001-2000 deniers. Most other guilds were regarded as having a lower social status or less wealth.<sup>473</sup> Thus, in 1584 too, Onderstraat would have belonged to the wealthier streets of the parish.

Except for Steendam, where there were many generous parishioners contributing to the collections of 1584 and 1585, the relative wealth of Vrijdagmarkt, Langemunt, Onderstraat and Meerseniersstraat is not reflected in the average amounts given during the collections. Only 48 separate donations were recorded from people living on Vrijdagmarkt square, even though it had 81 houses with an average cadastral income of 1358 deniers. The number of people from Onderstraat willing to give money to the church was also on the low side; the accounts recorded 28 contributions spread over the two collections, although in 1571-1572 it had 76 houses with an average cadastral income of 1689 deniers.<sup>474</sup>

However, it was not all negative. Many areas that were poorer in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, based on the taxation round of that time, gave amazingly generous amounts to the collections.<sup>475</sup> There are various explanations for the relatively limited generosity of the people in the more wealthy streets. First, apart from the economic crisis, which hit everyone, the more wealthy and prominent people of Ghent (30-40% of the population) were also hit by the enormous reconciliation tax, which they were made to pay in about the same period that the two large collections for the church took place. Even citizens and people originating from outside the region who wanted to emigrate were obliged to

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<sup>473</sup> Dambruyne, 394-99, 788-90. Using the reconciliation tax to determine someone's social or economic position remains complex because the appointed assessors took into account wealth, social status and involvement in Calvinism during the Ghent Calvinist Republic.

<sup>474</sup> Dambruyne, 787-90.

<sup>475</sup> Blockmans, 'Peilingen Naar de Sociale Structuren Te Gent Tijdens de Late 15e Eeuw', 230, 247. Many other streets gave more contributions to the collections than there had been households taxed at 1 guilder in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century. Large differences were found in Paisyserstraat (formerly Struvelstraat) and (Sint-)Cathelijnestraat. In 1494, only three people from Paisyserstraat had been able to pay their tax, but in 1584 and 1585, 19 contributions were made to the collections for the repairs to the church. These donations were on average the biggest of the parish. In Cathelijnestraat and Meerseniersstraat too, the number of gifts in the 1580s was about threefold the number of households that had paid 1 guilder in the 1490s. Both Paisyserstraat and Cathelijnestraat were considered poor neighbourhoods at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, but this might have changed, just like it had for Meerseniersstraat.

pay this tax before leaving. Assessors had evaluated the wealth and status of Ghent's citizens and their role in the Calvinist rebellion to decide the amount of tax they had to pay. For tax purposes, apart from financiers, political officials (at the end of the Calvinist Republic) were placed in one of the highest categories (wealth between 16,000 and 24,000 deniers). Deans (of guild) and linen merchants were placed in the category just below (8001-16,000). The artisans that mainly operated in St James, the mercers, brewers and tanners, were also assessed as belonging to a high taxation category (2001-4000 deniers). In the first taxation round, they paid on average between 5800 and 9300 deniers. As we have seen, the centres (and historic guildhouses) of these guilds were on Vrijdagmarkt square and in Onderstraat. Many other guild members that were taxed came from this area as well. It is logical that if a larger portion of one's income went on taxation, a smaller portion was left for the parish church. The high taxes paid by (linen) merchants, the nobility and officials might explain the relatively less prominent position of Langemunt in the church collection.<sup>476</sup>

Apart from this economic explanation, there may also have been social and religious reasons for parishioners not to give money or give less money to the church. Indirectly, this is already suggested by the reconciliation tax. Not only did the assessors take into account the role of citizens in the rebellion when setting the tax, but they could link the status and wealth of Ghent's citizens in 1584 with their political or religious position. Those who had favoured the Calvinist cause during the Calvinist Republic would have been more successful on an economic, political and social level than those who had opposed the regime. Thus those paying higher taxes had most likely been more in favour of Calvinism than others.<sup>477</sup> Other factors also influenced wealth and we do not know the weight given to Calvinist sympathies in the final taxation, so the link between Calvinist sympathies and taxation should not be regarded as a causal relationship in every case. However, overall, such sympathies did influence taxation. Another clue linking these streets with Calvinism comes from the previous decades. Delmotte found that in St James's parish, many of the men who would be accused of *gheuserie* after iconoclasm had lived in Langemunt, Vrijdagmarkt, Onderstraat and Steendam.<sup>478</sup> Moreover, the majority of those convicted for this religious-political rebellion in Ghent can be placed in three occupational categories: trade, crafts and the learned professions.<sup>479</sup> Dambruyne found that at least 45% of the group convicted of iconoclasm by the Council of Troubles were craft masters. Of those iconoclasts who were executed and whose profession is known,

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<sup>476</sup> Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 756–58, 394–99, 788–90.

<sup>477</sup> Dambruyne, 394–99.

<sup>478</sup> Delmotte, 'Het Calvinisme in de verschillende bevolkingslagen te Gent (1566-1567)', 166.

<sup>479</sup> Marnef, *Antwerp in the Age of Reformation. Underground Protestantism in a Commercial Metropolis 1550-1577*, 92–93.

65% (19 out of 29) were guild masters.<sup>480</sup> The willingness of merchants and artisans to show their sympathies for Calvinist ideas at a time when it was politically unacceptable (1566) was a precursor of the support they would give to the Calvinist Republic. Not only did this regime openly promote Calvinism and reward its sympathizers socially and politically, but it also claimed it was reinstating the political power of the guilds by reversing some of the restrictions ordered by Charles V in 1540. It should thus come as no surprise that the artisans and merchants in particular were enthusiastic supporters of the Calvinist Republic.<sup>481</sup> For some of these men and women, the surrender of Ghent to Farnese did not end this support or their unwillingness to support the Catholic Church. The fact that another group did choose to support the parish and did so generously illustrates, yet again, a shift to a more polarized society in Ghent.

### Loans

The churchwarden accounts that mention the two collections also recorded the individual loans arranged for the parish church. Loans from parishioners were not recorded in the accounts before 1577. The principle of contracting loans or selling annuities, however, was a well-known technique in this period for obtaining money at short notice. In previous years the Calvinist regime had arranged (forced) loans with wealthy people to fund works and collect money for the States General. But also before that, contracting loans was used by city magistrates.<sup>482</sup> Although the churchwarden accounts only mention 29 people who contributed in this way to the church, the total value of the loans was 418.59 pounds (100,461 deniers), which means that on average each person loaned 14.43 pounds or 3463 deniers to the church. These people were obviously the more prominent and wealthy members of the parish. The largest loan, 80 pounds and another 14 pounds on other occasions, came from the churchwarden Geeraert de Scheppere.<sup>483</sup> We have already come across his name as he was one of the churchwardens responsible for the two collections in St James's parish. He had been an alderman (bench

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<sup>480</sup> Delmotte, 'Het Calvinisme in de verschillende bevolkingslagen te Gent (1566-1567)', 159-61; Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 50-52; Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 641-42.

<sup>481</sup> Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 655-60.

<sup>482</sup> Despretz, 'De Instauratie Der Gentse Calvinistische Republiek (1577-1579)', 78-80; Boone, 'Systèmes Fiscaux Dans Les Principautés à Forte Urbanisation Des Pays-Bas Méridionaux (Flandre, Brabant, Hainaut, Pays de Liège) Au Bas Moyen Âge (XIVe-XVIe Siècle)'.

<sup>483</sup> Somers, *Inventaris van Het Oud Archief van de Kerkfabriek En Parochie Sint-Jacobs Te Gent Met Inbegrip van de Parochiale Instellingen. (1231) 1302-1885*, 41-43; Marc Boone, *Geld En Macht. De Gentse Stadsfinanciën En de Bourgondische Staatsvorming (1384-1453)*, Verhandelingen Der Maatschappij Voor Geschiedenis En Oudheidkunde Te Gent, XV (Ghent: Maatschappij voor geschiedenis en oudheidkunde te Gent, 1990), 17, 18, 199-207.



of the *Gedele* and of the *Keure*) in the 1560s. In 1566 he held the position of “*ontvanger van de wercke*”, which put him in charge of the accounts and the execution of the financial policy concerning the public works in Ghent.<sup>484</sup> Jan van Mariebeke gave a loan of 58 pounds, Jacob Snouck 42 pounds and Mattheus de Jonghe 33 pounds. Jacques Vanderhaghen<sup>485</sup> and Pieter Vanderhaghen, a Holy Spirit master and later churchwarden of St James, loaned 30 and 31 pounds respectively to the parish church. Jacques Vanderhaghen was soon repaid, as indicated by the outgoings recorded in the first ordinary accounts of 1583-1585. Others had to wait much longer to be paid back, as discussed later.<sup>486</sup>

A few other people who gave a loan to the church would later become a churchwarden or Holy Spirit master at St James. Laureins (H)elaut (16 pounds) would become a churchwarden and member of the Table of the Holy Spirit in the period 1600-1620.<sup>487</sup> Anthonis Baeke (8 pounds) would become a Holy Spirit master from 1594 onwards and a churchwarden from 1600 onwards.<sup>488</sup> Lowys Vander Linden (2 pounds) would be a Holy Spirit master from 1599-1602.<sup>489</sup>

The accounts of 1585-1586 also reveal that a few individuals paid an exceptional sum to the church for the restoration works: Joos van Auweghem, Laureys Blancquet and the silversmith Pieter van Hove donated 5, 3 and 2 pounds respectively. Blancquet had already given 1 pound in the large collection of 1584. In the ordinary accounts of 1585-1586, however, all three of them have written "according to the ordinance of the

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<sup>484</sup> SAG, *Memorieboek Gent*, part II, 1501-1572, 317, 338, 363.

<sup>485</sup> Not to be confused with the Jacques Vanderhaghen, lord of Gottem, who lived in the enclave of St Peter and was convicted for his role in the Troubles along with his brother Gherard Vanderhaghen. See: Scheerder, ‘Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567’, 241; This dissident Jacques Vanderhaghen probably returned to Ghent during the Calvinist Republic. He was alderman in 1579 (*Gedele*) and from 1582 to 1583 (*Keure*). See: Dambruyne, *Corporatieve Middengroepen. Aspiraties, Relaties En Transformaties in de 16de-Eeuwse Gentse Ambachtswereld*, 806; As there were many prominent and orthodox Vanderhaghens in St James’s parish, the Jacques Vanderhaghen who offered the loan was probably related to them. Apart from Pieter Vanderhaghen, the parish collection of 1568 mentioned Christoffels Vanderhaghen, a churchwarden and the dean of St James, Marcus Vanderhaghen and the widows of Lieven and Cornelis Vanderhaghen. A widow Vanderhaghen who lived in the same street (*Cammestraat*) as Pieter and Jacques Vanderhaghen, and most likely in the same house, also offered money for repairs in the collections of 1584 and 1585. See: RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 347, fo 11 ro-23 ro and Somers, *Inventaris van Het Oud Archief van de Kerkfabriek En Parochie Sint-Jacobs Te Gent Met Inbegrip van de Parochiale Instellingen. (1231) 1302-1885*, 41-48.

<sup>486</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 357, fo 28 vo.

<sup>487</sup> Somers, *Inventaris van Het Oud Archief van de Kerkfabriek En Parochie Sint-Jacobs Te Gent Met Inbegrip van de Parochiale Instellingen. (1231) 1302-1885*, 41-48.

<sup>488</sup> Somers, 41-48.

<sup>489</sup> Somers, 46-48. RAG, OKA Sint-Jacobs Gent, no 25, fo 17 ro - fo 19 ro.

magistracy of 5 February 1587".<sup>490</sup> This not only confirms that the accounts did not always keep to the year they were supposed to cover (1585-1586 in this case), but also that these gifts might not have been donated freely, but were in fact ordered by the magistrate. Nevertheless, most gifts were given voluntarily: Jan Hollandere, later a churchwarden, and Antheunis Maenschynne each gave 2 pounds for the repairs to the rood screen and Daneel de Zanghere gave 5 shillings with no further specification.<sup>491</sup>

The accounts of 1585-1586 were also the first ordinary churchwarden accounts that had a section for loans contracted with parishioners. Compared to the loans from parishioners recorded in the special repairs accounts of 1584-1586, they are quite small. Three men gave a loan of between 2 and 8 pounds to the church.<sup>492</sup> Some craftsmen accepted postponed payment for their work on the restoration of the church as a form of loan to the church. In the expenditure section, Antheunis Baeke received a little more than 17 shillings for his work after subtracting a loan of 8 pounds from the total that the church owed him. Adriaen Haetsche was paid a smaller amount, 10 shillings, while the church kept 9 pounds and 15 shillings as a loan.<sup>493</sup> The loan was paid back by the church much later, as recorded in the accounts of 1587-1588.<sup>494</sup> Antheunis Baeke had to wait even longer for his money. Although 18 shillings was handed over to him in 1588-1589, the bulk of the loan was only repaid in 1589-1590.<sup>495</sup> Baeke's assistance with the church's finances was recognized by his appointment, in 1600, as a churchwarden at St James.<sup>496</sup>

### Later collections

The collection of 1585 was not the last large collection in the decade following the end of the Calvinist Republic. The ordinary accounts of 1589-1590 reveal another remarkable collection, which was dated 1591. Four male parishioners (Pieter Arents, Jan van Tombeelee, Vincent Neerynck and Chaerles van Beerleere) were assigned to collect money for repairs from the parishioners of St James at Easter in 1591. They gathered a total of 118 pounds, but we do not know how many parishioners contributed, as no list was

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<sup>490</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs, no 358, fo 18 vo: "conforme zeker ordonnantie bij schepenen van de kuere verleent in daten den Ven febrri 87", For more info on the different fiscal systems, including forced loans see Boone, 'Systèmes Fiscaux Dans Les Principautés à Forte Urbanisation Des Pays-Bas Méridionaux (Flandre, Brabant, Hainaut, Pays de Liège) Au Bas Moyen Âge (XIVe-XVIe Siècle)', 665-67, 674-75, 680-82.

<sup>491</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 358, fo 18 vo.

<sup>492</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 358, fo 19 ro.

<sup>493</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 358, fo. 24 vo.

<sup>494</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 360, fo. 23 vo.

<sup>495</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 362, fo 27 ro, 361, fo 27 ro.

<sup>496</sup> Somers, *Inventaris van Het Oud Archief van de Kerkfabriek En Parochie Sint-Jacobs Te Gent Met Inbegrip van de Parochiale Instellingen. (1231) 1302-1885*, 43.

included in the accounts.<sup>497</sup> The four men in charge of collecting the money were, as far as is known, not churchwardens at that time. However, they were probably prominent figures in the parish, because at least two of them went on to become members of the Table of the Holy Spirit.<sup>498</sup> This large collection, together with a loan from the institution for poor relief for a total of 80 pounds, explains the huge rise in income in the accounts of 1588-1589.<sup>499</sup>

In 1600, yet another separate set of accounts for restoration works was drawn up. More repairs had taken place in addition to the ones recorded in the ordinary churchwarden accounts, and in order to finance these there was another collection held among the parishioners. Although the separate accounts have no introduction with more information, such as the date of the collection or the collectors, it does include a list of about 425 people with the amount they donated. A total of about 110 pounds was raised, which was enough to cover all the repairs recorded in those specific accounts.<sup>500</sup> Although the amount collected did not exceed that of 1591 or 1584, it is remarkable that the number of donors did. One possible explanation is the increase in population and the improved economic situation, which would have enabled a larger group to give a donation.<sup>501</sup> Or it may be that 15 years after the fall of the Calvinist regime, the popularity of Catholicism had become more widespread among the remaining parishioners.<sup>502</sup>

### 3.6 Conclusion

1584 could be considered an important turning point in the formation of a Catholic confessional identity in Ghent, even though there was no Ghent bishop to control or guide

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<sup>497</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 362, fo 19 vo.

<sup>498</sup> Somers, *Inventaris van Het Oud Archief van de Kerkfabriek En Parochie Sint-Jacobs Te Gent Met Inbegrip van de Parochiale Instellingen. (1231) 1302-1885*, 48.

<sup>499</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 362, fo 18 vo.

<sup>500</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 26 (special accounts of repairs 1600), fo 1-18 vo, 23 ro.

<sup>501</sup> Soen, 'The Beeldenstorm and the Spanish Habsburg Response (1566-1570)', 114-17; Guido Marnef, 'Protestant Conversions in an Age of Catholic Reformation: The Case of Sixteenth-Century Antwerp', in *The Low Countries as a Crossroads of Religious Beliefs*, Intersections Yearbook for Early Modern Studies 3 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2004), 33-47; Soen, *Geen Pardon Zonder Paus! Studie over de Complementariteit van Het Koninkrijk En Pauseijk Generaal Pardon (1570-1584) En over Inquisiteur-Generaal Michael Baius (1560-1576)*.

<sup>502</sup> De Frenne, 'Verzoening En Herstel van Het Vorstelijk Gezag. De Aartshertogen Albrecht En Isabella En de Stad Gent (1598-1621)', 253. In 1600, the famous Catholic archdukes Ferdinand and Isabella visited Ghent. This visit and their fervent Catholic policy may have strengthened Catholic sentiments.

the parishioners. Although many rural parishes and some urban parishes reacted much more slowly<sup>503</sup>, the processes of restoration in St James's parish tie in with the thesis of Judith Pollmann's book *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands (1520-1635)*. Pollmann argues that it was only after strong polarization between traditional Catholicism and the new religion – often the result of warfare and Calvinist regimes – that a more Counter-Reformed Catholicism could become an important marker of identity.<sup>504</sup> Geert Janssen affirms the idea of change brought about by ordinary Catholics and in particular he points to the influence of Catholic exiles on the formation of a renewed Catholicism.<sup>505</sup> However, the case of St James illustrates that Catholics who remained in Ghent also showed a change in attitude towards their church building after 1584, in comparison to the period following the first iconoclasm. This change does not mean that these Catholics involved in the restoration process of their parish church subscribed to all the Tridentine reforms, but at least some of them seemed to have a sense of urgency about restoring their church. Muller and van Eck have critiqued the strong focus on the agency of Catholics, but this chapter illustrates that it remains an essential perspective. It is true that they worked within an existing framework and that religion was imposed by the secular and ecclesiastical authorities. However, in the context of the first years following the Calvinist Republic, there was in fact less control over religion. While certain people chose to support the reconstruction of their parish church with enthusiasm, neighbours held on to reformed beliefs. Many of them would even leave Ghent in the following years. If there was ever a moment when highly divergent religious choices were to be made, it was then. Moreover, the link between (a sense of) persecution or political dominance by protestants and Catholic renewal can be found in other case studies as well. Alexandra Walsham found that in areas where there was more persecution, seminaries for the training of new priests blossomed faster than in many other areas that had remained Catholic. Examples include England, the northern Low Countries and areas of Germany and Hungary.<sup>506</sup>

The initiatives taken by the Catholics of Ghent can be clarified by the previous period. But they are also revealing because they precede a period of stronger ecclesiastical control. While the initial choices of these citizens were not only related to religious fervour, and cannot be separated from social and economic factors, they were crucial for the functioning of the church in Ghent. For Ghent, they were the first steps towards a

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<sup>503</sup> Spiertz, 'Succes en falen van de katholieke reformatie', 65–68; Braeken, *De dekenij Herentals (1603-1669). Bijdrage tot de studie van het godsdienstig leven in het bisdom Antwerpen*, 84.

<sup>504</sup> Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635*, 2–5, 43, 124, 131, 142.

<sup>505</sup> Janssen, 'The Exile Experience'; Janssen, 'The Counter-Reformation of the Refugee: Exile and the Shaping of Catholic Militancy in the Dutch Revolt'.

<sup>506</sup> Alexandra Walsham, 'Translating Trent? English Catholicism and the Counter Reformation', *Historical Research* 78, no. 201 (2005): 293.

restoration that could be interpreted as resulting from the wish to return to the old and familiar, as well as the desire to implement the long-awaited and carefully planned reforms of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Regardless of the motives and ideas behind the actions, the initial process of restoration was for a large part directed bottom-up. In the following chapters I will go into more detail about the nature of the changes, first by looking at the repairs and alterations made to the church building, and then through an analysis of the interest of parishioners in religious ideas and their devotional activities.



## Chapter 4

### Restoration of the church

The chronology of the physical repairs and building projects is as interesting as the financial organization. The churchwarden accounts enable us to gather valuable data on this topic, although they do not provide enough details to endeavour an art-historical study. This shift in focus to the more material side of the parish is necessary and useful. The parish was not just defined by its social and spiritual culture, but also by its material culture. Moreover, the historiography on religion is increasingly embracing this material aspect, making fruitful use of art-historical insights and leading to more cross-disciplinary research to understand better late medieval and early modern piety. For example, the doctoral thesis of Ruben Suykerbuyk is a successful attempt to marry social-historical insights with art-historical research.<sup>507</sup>

Another obvious reason for exploring the physical parish church is, of course, the materiality of the two outbreaks of iconoclasm during the period under study. These acts of violence were directed against the images, devotional objects and architectural elements in churches. David Freedberg has explained this iconoclasm by linking the popular Calvinist theology with a universal obsession with the power of images.<sup>508</sup> Indeed, the debates on the use of images in religion had been very popular in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and were followed by large sections of the population.<sup>509</sup> The destructive acts were the result of religious conviction and impacted the existing communal and religious traditions through the assault on physical and material culture. They were a sort of ritual practice.<sup>510</sup> If the assault on Catholicism was marked by a mix of social, spiritual and

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<sup>507</sup> Suykerbuyk, 'The Matter of Piety. Material Culture in Zoutleeuw's Church of Saint Leonard (c. 1450-1620)'.

<sup>508</sup> Freedberg, *Iconoclasts and Their Motives*.

<sup>509</sup> Van Bruaene, Jonckheere, and Suykerbuyk, 'Introduction. Beeldenstorm: Iconoclasm in the Sixteenth-Century Low Countries', 8.

<sup>510</sup> Suykerbuyk, 'The Matter of Piety. Material Culture in Zoutleeuw's Church of Saint Leonard (c. 1450-1620)', 4; Duke, *Dissident Identities in the Early Modern Low Countries*, 190.

material elements, it is only logical that the restoration afterwards was marked by these same aspects. Just as ideology and physical action had gone hand in hand during the iconoclasm, so a restoration of Catholic ideology came coupled with physical repairs and the restoration of the church. Thus the study of material culture is key to understanding Catholic society in the decades after 1566.

Whereas Suykerbuyk's research has studied various architectural and art objects in detail, this thesis will only skim the surface. An overview of the organization of the repairs, which gives various clues as to the meaning and importance of the physical church space for the parishioners, forms the basis of this chapter. This analysis gives us insight into the destruction inflicted on St James during the two outbreaks of iconoclasm at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, the study of the repairs organized by the churchwardens and other parishioners reveals their priorities and the meaning of specific architectural elements, church space and furniture in liturgy and in other contexts at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Some of the trends uncovered through the study of the material culture of St James can clearly be linked to the larger religious phenomena of Reformation and Counter-Reformation that influenced Europe during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

We have already discussed the emotional response of Van Vaernewijck to specific damage to St James. As he regarded the church building and interior of St James, created by parishioners through centuries of work and gifts, he felt that iconoclasm was an attack on the community itself. His writings reveals how strongly material culture, devotion, tradition and community were intertwined. Iconoclasts attacked objects of both a secular and religious nature and of both great artistic and practical value, as long as these could be linked with the Catholic Church. Neither they nor Van Vaernewijck made the distinction between the sacred and the secular that we do today. The destruction and the repairs can thus illustrate in part the meanings attached to the physical parish church. The multiple layers of meaning of church objects in the period following the first outbreak of iconoclasm has been explored by David de Boer for various churches in the Low Countries. The study of various narrative sources enabled him to distinguish the overlapping functions and values Catholic contemporaries gave to objects destroyed by iconoclasts.<sup>511</sup>

Materiality is a complex matter as the parish church consisted also of many elements of different orders. On a basic level the church was like any other building, requiring a sound structure and an enclosed space: windows, a roof and doors to protect the interior, objects and people against bad weather and theft. Other practical aspects were the floors, lighting and seating, which had to be in place to make the church building ready for use. However, all these elements are also closely connected with attendance at religious

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<sup>511</sup> de Boer, 'Picking up the Pieces. Catholic Material Culture and Iconoclasm in the Low Countries', 61–63.



services. Some spaces within the church, such as the chapels and the chancel, or furniture such as altars and the tabernacle, point directly to the celebration of mass and sacraments. A variety of devotional practices took place in the parish church and they had different material requirements: baptism, confirmation, preaching, mass, processions, funerals and private devotions made use of the church in different ways. The repairs and works in the church after the Troubles gradually enabled the church to start fully functioning again.

Not all the works that the churchwardens paid for and not every gift to the church had a practical goal in mind. As art and sensory experience was believed to encourage devotion, some works were focused on the embellishment of religious services. This had been encouraged by the Council of Trent.<sup>512</sup> The fact that parishioners could start anew with their material culture also inspired a new creativity and encouraged the creation of different kinds of furniture, art and ecclesiastical objects. Sadly, the churchwarden accounts are rather silent on the aesthetic aspect of the art and treasury of St James, at least for the period under study. Where possible, secondary literature is used to reconstruct this process of restoration and the use of church space in St James.

How did this process of restoration and construction in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century relate to the well-known art-historical movements that preceded and followed the period under study? Some concepts used in the study of later Catholic art, such as baroque art, are useful here. Early modern religious art and architecture did not just encourage devotion, nor were they simply forms of propaganda for Catholicism. Recent studies on art are shifting their perspective on “baroque art”. Eelco Nagelsmit, who analysed various art projects in religious buildings in Brussels during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, considers religious art in this period to be a negotiation with the divine. This conclusion goes hand in hand with the shift in focus of the historiography on early modern art and religion towards regarding the Counter-Reformation not just as a top-down process. Art and architecture were not just there to convince the other, the subordinates of state and church, of Catholic dogma. Rather, Catholics at all levels of society linked the challenges in the religious-political world to God’s wrath. There was thus a generally felt need for acts of faith that would turn away God’s wrath. Art, architecture and the practices linked to them could fulfil this function.<sup>513</sup> This new understanding of the role of art and architecture makes a study of the reconstruction of the church building of St James and its architectural space in the pre-baroque period particularly worthwhile.

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<sup>512</sup> Freedberg, *The Power of Images. Studies in the History and Theory of Response*; Ralph Dekoninck et al., eds., *Cultures Du Spectacle Baroque. Cadres, Expériences et Représentations Des Solennités Religieuses Entre Italie et Anciens Pays-Bas*, Belgisch Historisch Instituut Te Rome - Artes 10 (Brussels, Rome: Belgisch Historisch Instituut te Rome, 2019).

<sup>513</sup> Eelco Nagelsmit, ‘Venite & Videte: Art and Architecture in Brussels as Agents of Change during the Counter Reformation, c. 1609-1659’ (doctoral dissertation, Leiden, Universiteit Leiden, 2014), 17, 35–47.

Another reason for examining the process of reconstructing St James is that it seems to have followed a different course from many other churches in Flanders and questions the general chronology of Catholic recovery. When did Catholic recovery and revival really take off? The general descriptions of contemporary bishops, as well as later historians, on the state of churches in Flanders at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century are very negative. A. Pasture, E. De Moreau and Henri Pirenne have painted a picture of Flanders that shows most churches deteriorating further after 1584 as a result of warfare and depopulation.<sup>514</sup> This representation was primarily based on the study of smaller rural communities, where reconstruction happened at a slower pace.<sup>515</sup>

However, in urban communities too, restoration could be painfully slow. Recent research on the church of St Pharahild in Ghent<sup>516</sup>, as well as St James in Antwerp and other parish churches in that city<sup>517</sup>, illustrate that the destruction inflicted at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century presented major challenges. Whereas towns throughout the late Middle Ages were very familiar with large building projects and never-ending building works on churches, for some churches the iconoclasm of 1566 and the attacks during the Calvinist Republic were too ferocious to overcome. This was due to various reasons, which included the extent of the damage, financial resources, the shock inflicted, the unpreparedness of the parish, and the changing political and religious context. In comparison to many other churches, St James in Ghent seems to have had a relatively smooth restoration. Jeffrey Muller's study on St James in Antwerp points to the rather slow start of the restoration work there and mainly focuses on the large building works that only began in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>518</sup> Furthermore, the thesis of Catholic passivity as a characteristic of 16<sup>th</sup>-century Netherlands has also influenced the general viewpoint on physical renewal in churches in this period.<sup>519</sup>

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<sup>514</sup> Pasture, *La Restauration Religieuse Aux Pays-Bas Catholiques Sous Les Archiducs Albert et Isabelle (1596-1633)*; E. de Moreau, *Histoire de l'église En Belgique*, 5 vols (Brussels, 1940); Henri Pirenne, *Histoire de Belgique*, 2e éd. revue et corrigée (Brussels: Lamertin, 1902), <http://lib.ugent.be/catalog/rug01:001293100>.

<sup>515</sup> Bart Minnen, 'Den Heyligen Sant al in Brabant', *De Sint-Martinuskerk van Wezemaal En de Cultus van Sint-Job (1000-2000)*, vol. 1 (Averbode: Altiora Averbode, 2011), (2), 147. The repairs to the roof of the church of St Martin in Wezemaal only started in 1596.

<sup>516</sup> Somers, "'Amici nunc sicut et antea". Een stedelijke parochiekerk en een prinselijk kapittel tussen kerk en wereld in het laatmiddeleeuwse en vroegmoderne Gent. Sint-Niklaas en Sint-Veerle, 1384-1614.'; Somers and Bauwens, 'The Institutional Nature of Parishes and the Restoration of the Church after Iconoclasm: The Case of St. James and St. Pharahild in Ghent (1566-1614)'.

<sup>517</sup> Muller, *St. Jacob's Antwerp Art and Counter Reformation in Rubens's Parish Church*, 9.

<sup>518</sup> Muller, 34-38.

<sup>519</sup> A recent, but rather nuanced version of this is found in Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635*; the older historiography had a very pessimistic view on the role of the laity in early modern Catholicism: De Brouwer, *Godsdienstig leven en kerkelijke instellingen 1550-1621. Land van Aalst*; Hans Storme, 'Dommer Als de Staeken Zelve. Pastoraal Pessimisme over Gelovigheid En Geloofskennis van "Het

On the other hand, Andrew Spicer has illustrated that directly after the episodes of iconoclasm, precise and immediate action was undertaken to restore churches and make them ready for Catholic services as fast as possible. He focused more on the political authorities in this matter and thus cannot answer the question whether parishioners themselves were passive or not in this restoration.<sup>520</sup> A study that has illustrated the activity of the middle groups of society in religious restoration was made by Frederik Verleysen. He found that both during the Calvinist Republic and in the decades following it, Antwerp craftsmen searched for ways to reconstruct and embellish the altars of their corporations and continue religious practices such as mass and processions.<sup>521</sup> In addition, Muller's case study on St James in Antwerp highlights the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but also proves that the last decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century were a period of important change.<sup>522</sup> Moreover, Koenraad Jonckheere has looked at art made during the first decades after the first iconoclasm and argues there are clearly changing trends in art that indicate modified views on the role of art in Catholicism and thus on ideology.<sup>523</sup> These studies all point to the last decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century as a period of active change in the field of religious materiality. This chapter discusses the topic of material and religious change further via the case study on St James in Ghent. The choice to focus on the first decades following the two outbreaks of iconoclasm, helps to shed light on Counter-Reformation during the less documented time when both ecclesiastical and secular powers were under construction or at least less dominant in the local church.

## 4.1 The repairs after the first iconoclasm

Even though it took many months after the iconoclasm of 1566 to collect enough funds for the necessary repairs, it was thanks to the increase in the income categories that eventually made this possible. By 1569 the major repairs had taken place and the parish

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Gelovige Volk", in *Geloven in Het Verleden. Studies over Het Godsdienstig Leven in de Vroegmoderne Tijd, Aangeboden Aan Michel Cloet*, vol. 22, Symbolae Facultatis Litterarum et Philosophiae Lovaniensis, A (Louvain: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 1996), 203–22.

<sup>520</sup> Spicer, 'After Iconoclasm: Reconciliation and Resacralisation in the Southern Netherlands, c. 1566–1585'.

<sup>521</sup> Frederik Verleysen, "'Pretense Confrerieën'? Devotie Als Communicatie in de Antwerpse Corporatieve Wereld Na 1585', *Tijdschrift Voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 27, no. 2 (2001): 159–66.

<sup>522</sup> Muller, *St. Jacob's Antwerp Art and Counter Reformation in Rubens's Parish Church*, 67–85, 192–198.

<sup>523</sup> Koenraad Jonckheere and Ruben Suykerbuyk, *Art after Iconoclasm, Painting in the Netherlands between 1566 and 1585* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012); These early changes are also described in R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal 1540–1770*, New Approaches to European History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 152–58.

had only had an abnormally high level of expenditure on repairs for three years. The churchwarden accounts and Van Vaernewijck's chronicle give us a clear idea of what was repaired in the first years following iconoclasm.

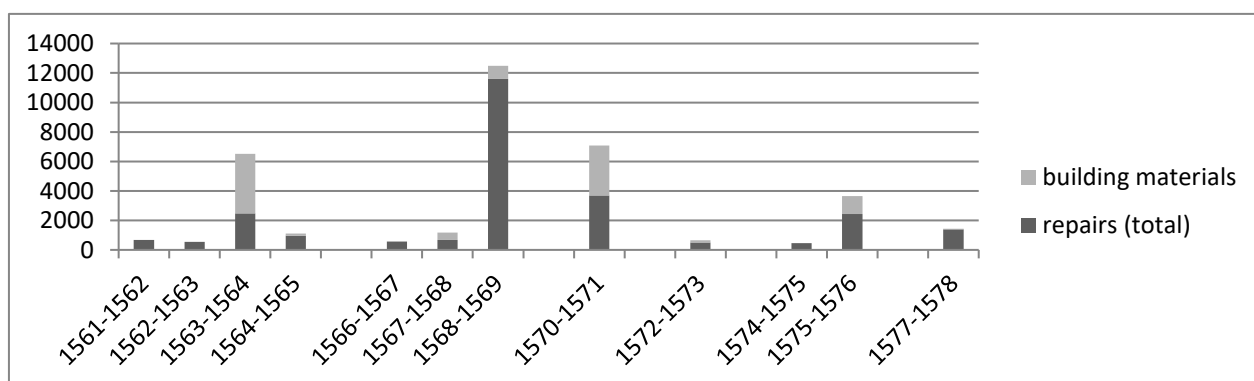


Figure 12 Graph amount spent on repairs and building materials for St James per accounting year in Flemish denier groten (1561-1578)

In the immediate aftermath of the iconoclasm there were some small initiatives for repairs, which proves that at least some people hoped for a quick continuation of church services. The churchwardens arranged for guards to protect against further damage and theft, and they took care of the first replacements and repairs.<sup>524</sup> The sculptor of the stone seats that had been pulled down agreed to help fix the damage done and place the seats back in their original position.<sup>525</sup> The nuns of St John's hospital ordered a new stained glass window to replace the one near where they usually sat.<sup>526</sup> For other groups belonging to St James, external pressure seemed necessary. After the city councils second intervention in March 1568, the craft guilds also started to restore their chapels. Van Vaernewijck took a central role in these repairs as not only was he a churchwarden but also the appointed head of seven craft guilds that had their chapels in the church of St James. He thus had to coordinate most of the repairs.<sup>527</sup>

In the meantime, Van Vaernewijck and the other churchwardens<sup>528</sup> had organized other repairs for the church building and by 1568 things started to gain momentum. As shown in the previous chapter, the gifts of the parishioners were crucial for the most

<sup>524</sup> Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, 173 (II).

<sup>525</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 148 (I).

<sup>526</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 151 (I).

<sup>527</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 293-295 (III); Van Bruaene, *Om Beters Wille. Rederijerskamers En de Stedelijke Cultuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (1400-1650)*, 151. For the restoration works done by the chamber of rhetoric Mariën Theeren, see Van Bruaene

<sup>528</sup> In this period, Jan Damman, Jan Vander Varent, Christoffels Vander Haeghen and Van Hauweghem were also churchwardens. See: Somers, *Inventaris van Het Oud Archief van de Kerkfabriek En Parochie Sint-Jacobs Te Gent Met Inbegrip van de Parochiale Instellingen. (1231) 1302-1885*, 42.

important restoration work. They enabled the completion of most of the repairs within a few years. A week after the official assessment, made on 29 September 1567, work started on the sacrament house (*sacramentshuis*). This was the church's tabernacle, which with its beautiful sculpted ornaments not only represented a fine piece of art, but also expressed the importance of sacramental devotion.<sup>529</sup>

The accounts of 1567-1568 and 1568-1569 also recorded various other refurbishments: the rood screen, chancel doors, stalls in the choir, caster chairs and other seats in the sacristy and chancel, a white stone table and the baptismal font. The reconstructed statue of Mary and a new crucifix were placed behind the high altar and the statue of St James was painted. The chancel was thus the top priority, although the graveyard also received attention during the first repairs. There was an order for a crucifix to be installed on the gate of the graveyard and some paintwork. Work was also carried out on the chapel of the Holy Cross. Furthermore, the accounts recorded several transactions for the repair of windows at various places.<sup>530</sup>

Figures 13 and 14 give a schematic overview of the work done in the church and the location of the repairs or refurbishments in the years following iconoclasm.

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<sup>529</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 74-75, 91-92 (III); Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, 174-175 (II); Bangs, *Church Art and Architecture in the Low Countries before 1566*, 105-7.

<sup>530</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 346 fo 16 ro-17 ro and no 347 fo 15 ro-16 vo.

### First phase: 1567-1569

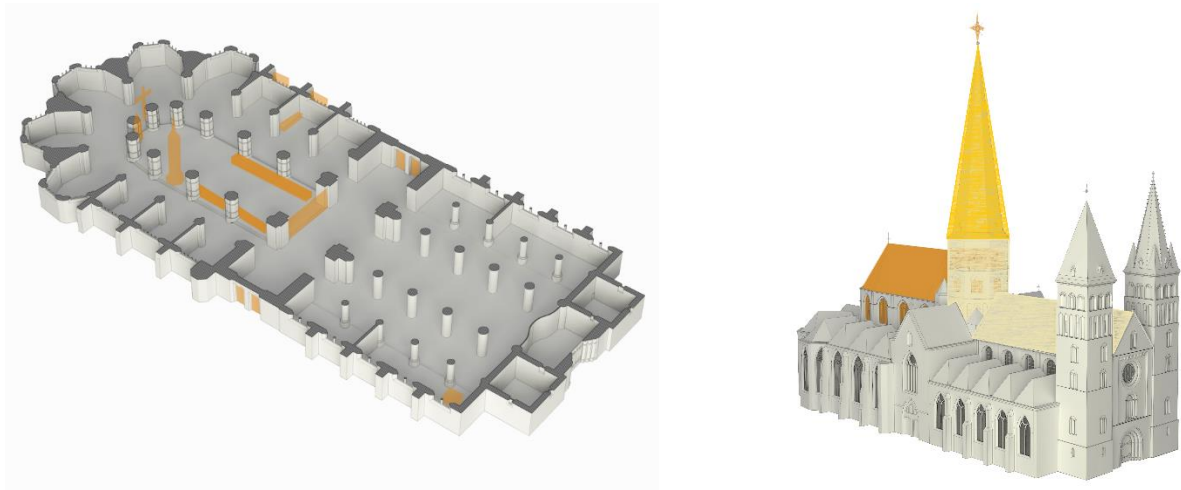


Figure 13 Perspective on ground plan and exterior of St James with schematic highlighting of the zones where work was done in the period 1567-1569.<sup>531</sup>

### Second phase: 1569-1578

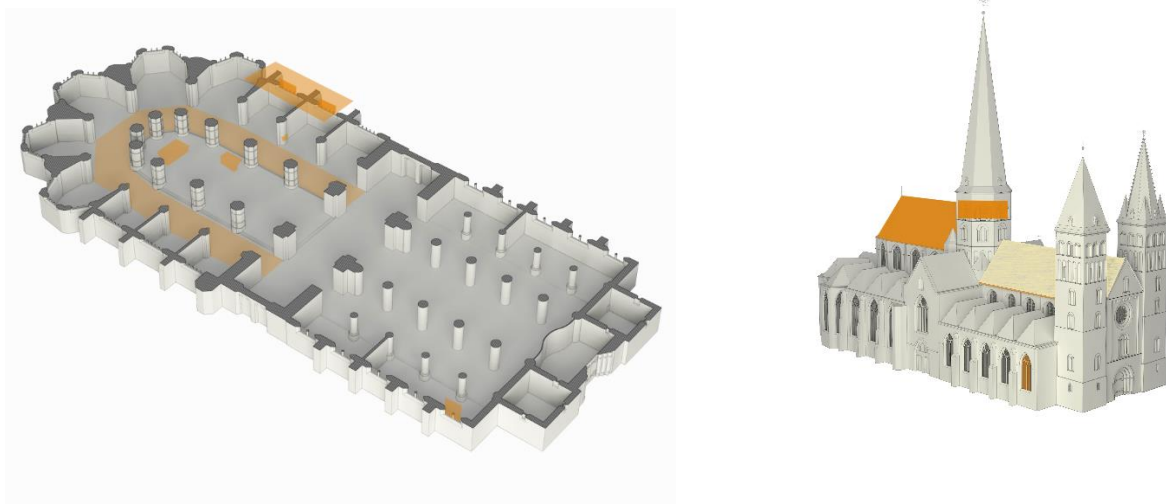


Figure 14 Perspective on ground plan and exterior of St James with schematic highlighting of the zones where work was done in the period 1569-1578.

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<sup>531</sup> The exact location of the repairs or installation of church furniture was often not specified in the accounts. Only when the location was mentioned, for example seating in the choir, did I highlight a zone in the model, but even then the exact position remains a guess. The figure thus give a general impression of the kind of work done in the different areas of the church. The zone highlighted on the tower indicates the work on the church bells. Roof work was recorded in many accounts. The highlighting of the roof of the choir only reflects work on the roof with no further specification.

With regard to the interior and refurbishments, the chancel received considerable attention. In the accounts following those of 1568-1569, we find the construction of seats for the clergy of the choir (*cantorstoelen*) in the high chancel<sup>532</sup>, repairs made to the chancel-aisle (*zijkoor*) and the erection of a new altar piece for the high altar.<sup>533</sup> A few other areas were mentioned as well: windows were replaced and a bench installed in the sacristy, and new windows were installed in the chapel of the shoemakers (*elseneers*) or chapel of the Lamentation (*Nood Gods*) as well as the chapel where the baptismal font stood.<sup>534</sup> By 1573-1574, a new organ had been installed in the church, but it had been mentioned already earlier in the accounts.<sup>535</sup> As its exact location is unknown this is not shown in the figures above. Work was also done on the church exterior, but as this had been less attacked by the iconoclasts, no intensive repairs were needed, except for the roof.

A constant in all the accounts following 1566 is the work on the roof. One of the first major repairs was the tower, including its windows, roof and the cross on the top. The transport and repair of the bells is also recorded in several accounts. In 1568-1569, work was carried out on the roof of the nave and, as shown in Figure 13, on the windows of the sanctuary and the chancel.<sup>536</sup> A roof worker was again paid in 1570-1571 and 1573-1574.<sup>537</sup> In 1575-1576, two separate roof workers and their apprentices did repairs for which more than 3,000 roof tiles had been bought. It is possible that these repairs were not direct consequences of iconoclasm, and that the roof simply needed repairing. The 1575-1576 accounts recorded repairs above the sanctuary as well. More restoration work was carried out, but many of the descriptions are too vague to pinpoint the location of the works in the church.<sup>538</sup> For example, the accounts of 1568-1569 mentioned metalwork, masonry, the purchase of nails, sand, bricks, stones, tiles and cymbals.<sup>539</sup> The accounts of 1575-1576 recorded wrought ironwork and the laying of floor tiles.<sup>540</sup>

Numerous smaller repairs and purchases can be found in the accounts as well: the installation and painting of the church's iron doors, the removal of the lead of the broken organ and the repair of flags.<sup>541</sup> Many of these purchases and finer repairs can be directly linked to the continuation and enhancing of the celebration of mass and other church

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<sup>532</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 348 fo 25 ro.

<sup>533</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 348 fo 23 ro.

<sup>534</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 348 fo 23 ro.

<sup>535</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 348 fo 23 ro, 354, fo 24 vo.

<sup>536</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 347, fo 23 vo-30 vo.

<sup>537</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 348, fo 22 ro-26 ro, 349, fo 26 ro-28 ro.

<sup>538</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 352, fo 19 vo-20 vo.

<sup>539</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 347, fo 23 vo-30 vo.

<sup>540</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 352, fo 19 vo-20 vo.

<sup>541</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 347, fo 23 vo, 30 vo.

rituals. As early as 1567-1568, new vestments were being made for priests.<sup>542</sup> In 1568-1569 a goldsmith repaired utensils for mass, such as the ciborium (vessel for the host) and an ivory case, and there were repairs to tapestries and altar covers.<sup>543</sup> In 1570-1571 a silver cross that stood on the altar and two others were repaired.<sup>544</sup> This was also the accounting year when many more textile repairs and purchases took place. The making of tunics was a major expense: choir vestments for the chaplains who performed daily in the choir (*cotidiane*), tunics made of black velvet and Sunday tunics/chasubles made of violet and purple damask. Flags, altar covers, chalice veils and palls were also made. The black pall was painted and black linen was bought to make a new pall.<sup>545</sup> The expenditure on textiles increased in the following years: the churchwardens again paid for tunics as well as a white altar covering in 1572-1573<sup>546</sup>, for sewing a cross on a black altar cover, a black velvet cope (semi-circular cape worn by priests) and ribbons in 1573-1574,<sup>547</sup> and for the purchase of more linen and a green velvet cope in 1574-1575.<sup>548</sup> During the 1570s, the number and purchases of utensils necessary for church rituals and services also grew: holy water fonts and tin chrismaria (vessels for chrism, the holy anointing oil) (1572-1573)<sup>549</sup>, a silver and a stone holy water font, a silver wand (*roede*) and a general reference without any details to the purchase of sacramentals by the bailiff (1573-1574).<sup>550</sup>

Keeping the objects inside the church safe was also a challenge. The accounts of 1568-1569 recorded the purchase of chains to lock the books<sup>551</sup>, and in 1575-1576 repairs were made to the locks and keys of the church.<sup>552</sup> The abundance of references to the purchase and repair of quite small pieces of furniture and utensils in the accounts following 1566, and especially after 1570, illustrate how iconoclasm had attacked many of the objects that were used for Catholic liturgy, such as the celebration of mass. The restoration thus focused relatively quickly on the resumption of church services and tried to replace the various pieces of church furniture, ornamentals and utensils that had been destroyed during the iconoclasm.

There is no indication of a large building project with an agenda to introduce new ideas on religion in the parish. By the mid-1570s, the most urgent repairs were finished

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<sup>542</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 346, fo 16 vo.

<sup>543</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 347, fo 25 vo.

<sup>544</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 347, fo 26 ro.

<sup>545</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 347, fo 23ro – 31ro; no 348, fo 23vo.

<sup>546</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 349, fo 27 vo.

<sup>547</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 350.

<sup>548</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 351, fo 24 ro.

<sup>549</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 349, fo 27 ro – 27 vo.

<sup>550</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 350.

<sup>551</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 347, 23 ro.

<sup>552</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 352, fo. 20r, 20v.



and more attention was paid to refurbishment and smaller repairs. In the following years, income and expenses dropped to the levels of the early 1560s. In 1575-1576 a few repairs took place, but the amount spent on these works remained below the amount spent on repairs in 1563-1564. The largest share of the total expenditure for repairs went on the church roof and this is not necessarily linked to the iconoclasm.

There are practically no records of work performed on the side altars and chapels of St James, which makes sense as most guilds and specific users of a chapel were responsible for these repairs and separate accounts were used. However, there are some exceptions. We already mentioned the windows in the chapel of the shoemakers, also called the chapel of the Lamentation, which were repaired and paid for by the churchwardens in 1570-1571.<sup>553</sup> Marien Theeren repaired a chrome statue of Our Lady, two statues of prophets and ordered a new stained-glass window for their chapel.<sup>554</sup> As we have seen above, Marcus van Vaernewijck took a central role in the repairs of several other chapels as he was appointed head of seven craft guilds that held their chapels in the church of St James. For the other guilds who had altars and chapels, we know the city government had to ask at least twice to start repairs of the chapels of St James and other parish churches (see discussion chapter 3). Spicer, who studied mainly the initiatives taken by the central government, in particular Margaret of Parma describes how quickly the restoration of the churches was commanded. Parma also called upon the bishops to reconcile the churches as she felt the reestablishment of the religious landscape went hand in hand with the restoration of royal authority.<sup>555</sup> Verleysen's research on corporative associations in Antwerp indicates that also artisans and guilds thought it important to continue services on their altars and in their chapels. His focus was however more on the period following the years of Calvinist Rule in Antwerp.<sup>556</sup>

Another alteration that only left subtle indications in the churchwarden accounts is the purchase of the altarpiece for which St James asked financial help to its patron, the abbey of St Peter in Ghent. The prelate, Ghiseleen de Temmerman agreed in the early 1570's to pay for a triptych for the restored high altar and for the organ. The churchwarden accounts have no clear transaction for an altarpiece recorded and the main reason we know about this is through legal documents. Apparently, the abbot tried to refuse paying the full amount once the painting was completed, and argued that he was not depicted on it as the donor. After complaints of the churchwardens of St James

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<sup>553</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 348 fo 23 ro.

<sup>554</sup> Van Bruaene, *Om Beters Wille. Rederijerskamers En de Stedelijke Cultuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (1400-1650)*, 151.

<sup>555</sup> Spicer, 'After Iconoclasm: Reconciliation and Resacralisation in the Southern Netherlands, c. 1566-1585'.

<sup>556</sup> Verleysen, "'Pretense Confrerieën'? Devotie Als Communicatie in de Antwerpse Corporatieve Wereld Na 1585', 159.

in 1577, the magistrates had to intervene. Most likely they came to an agreement as the painting still exists today and depicts Ghiseleen de Temmerman on the outside of one of the side panels. This triptych has been claimed to be the work of the artist Michiel Coxie (1499-1592). In the churchwarden accounts of 1570 we find that the bailiff received money for his work in meeting up with churchwardens and magistrates in order to get financial aid for the purchase of a new altarpiece and organ.<sup>557</sup> The organ is mentioned again in 1577 when the parishioner Joos Triest arranges funds for its purchase and work on the new organ is paid for. And finally the document records a deficit of over 4 pounds linked to the new organ and altarpiece, illustrating that there was indeed an unresolved financial issue.<sup>558</sup>

## 4.2 Restoration and religious practice, 1566-1578

The major repairs at St James enabled the daily practical use of the church, but not everything invested in the building can be translated into specific religious practices. A few elements of this restoration, however, are clearly linked to fundamental beliefs and can help in understanding Catholic worship and doctrine in this turbulent period. We will discuss two architectural/sculptural elements of St James that were tackled during the very first repairs following iconoclasm and that were of great importance to Van Vaernewijck and many other parishioners.<sup>559</sup> These are the church tabernacle and the rood screen, two elements that were part of the chancel. Everything in the chancel was designed for and directed attention to the celebration of mass. The mass or Eucharist was the most important ritual of the church, a reliving of the reconciliation between God and

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<sup>557</sup> Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, (II) 185-187; R. van Driessche, 'Het Portret van Ghiseleen de Temmerman, Abt van de Gentse St. Pietersabdij', *Ghendtsche Tydinghen* 35, no. 4 (2006): 235-47. RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 348, fo 23 ro: "Item up den kersst LXX betaelt den baillu deser kercken voor zynen sallaris van ten diverschen stonden de meesters, notable ende ghemeente ghedachvaert thebbene om huerlieden goetwilleghen presentatien te doene thulpen van eene nieuwe tafele up den hooghen altaer ende een nieuwe orghele IIII Schellingen groot"

<sup>558</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 354, fo 24 vo, 25 vo, 28 ro; no 356, fo 12 ro.

<sup>559</sup> By analysing the sources on iconoclasm and the repairs for information on religious practice, we do not always grasp the full context of the sources. The churchwarden accounts simply discussed every material aspect for which the churchwardens had to pay, while eyewitness accounts such as that of Marcus van Vaernewijck seemed to list what was generally considered a great loss. Whether this was secular or ecclesiastical in nature was secondary. See de Boer, 'Picking up the Pieces. Catholic Material Culture and Iconoclasm in the Low Countries', 70-73.

men through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The consecration of the bread and wine was for many the focal point of the mass. Communion through the bread and wine, which symbolized the broken body and blood of Christ, enabled this reconciliation on both a personal level and on a communal level. During the late Middle Ages, parishioners usually took communion only on special feast days such as Easter or Christmas. A Christian was expected to go to communion at least once a year, after he or she had confessed their sins before a priest. This limited physical participation of believers in the Eucharist had been questioned on various occasions. For example, Thomas à Kempis pleaded for a more regular communion, but this practice only began after the Council of Trent.<sup>560</sup>

### Tabernacle

Both the churchwarden accounts of St James's parish and Van Vaernewijck's narrative mention the repair of the tabernacle. Various remarks of Marcus van Vaernewijck affirm that he held the beautiful ornate tabernacle in high esteem. It was a shrine for the consecrated host and thus a centrepiece of Eucharist piety, which was central in Catholic liturgy and important for parish pride. The cost of restoring the tabernacle to its former glory, or exceed it, as Van Vaernewijck had hoped, was estimated to be 26 pounds. The materials retrieved from the broken tabernacle could be partly reused, but the churchwardens decided that if new stone had to be bought, it had to be "*Avennes*" stone (limestone from Avesne in northern France) and not "*perpeijn*", which was a cheaper material.<sup>561</sup> In his account, Van Vaernewijck mentioned the restoration of the tabernacles of St Michael and St Saviour, and commented on the tabernacle of St John, the first to be restored in Ghent. He explained this "achievement" by pointing to the fact that St John was the cathedral and had a larger budget than ordinary parish churches. Furthermore, he stressed that this tabernacle, unlike that of St James, had only had its bottom half broken. Despite all the cathedral's advantages, Van Vaernewijck was shocked that after its reconstruction, the tabernacle of St John was smaller than the previous one. He found this embarrassing for the craftsmen who had built it and even more so for the two canons who had arranged for the work and who, according to Van Vaernewijck, had no knowledge of art or of building at all.<sup>562</sup>

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<sup>560</sup> Bogaers, *Aards, Betrokken En Zelfbewust. De Verwevenheid van Cultuur En Religie in Katholiek Utrecht, 1300-1600*, 203–5; Lee Palmer Wandel, ed., *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Reformation*, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 46 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2014); Amy Nelson Burnett, 'The Social History of Communion and the Reformation of the Eucharist', *Past & Present*, no. 211 (2011): 43; Andrew Spicer, 'Sites of the Eucharist', in *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Reformation*, ed. Lee Palmer Wandel, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 46 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2014), 325–26.

<sup>561</sup> See for a study of tabernacles in the iconoclasm and their important role in devotion: Van Bruaene, 'Embodied Piety. Sacrament Houses and Iconoclasm in the Sixteenth-Century Low Countries', 37.

<sup>562</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 91–92 (III).

Van Vaernewijck's demand for a tabernacle of a very high quality and thus high price is remarkable in this period, when the church had many needs.<sup>563</sup> However, as we will see in our discussion of the rood screen, it was common for people asking for a new piece of furniture or interior design to refer to existing designs and demand that their piece be better. Indeed, we see that similar demands were also being made for other tabernacles. For example, Van Bruaene found this demand in the 1553 contract for the construction of the sacrament house of St Nicholas in Ghent. The phrasing may be considered as formulaic language, but pride still played a role and the wish for a visually better design and finish was real. Donors wanted their gift/investment to appear better than the previous one.<sup>564</sup> Van Vaernewijck's reaction to the sacrament house of St John and the wish to have better one in St James illustrate how restoration was more than just repairing what was broken. The glory of God and the honour of the parish and city (and the artisans in charge) were at stake.

The restoration of the tabernacle is repeatedly mentioned in the churchwarden accounts of "1568-1569", but the work would have taken place and been completed by the beginning of 1568. Apart from the major work of constructing it in its entirety, the sacrament house also needed an iron fence around its base and the canopy to be painted. When the work was completed, the stone cutter Adriaen Dhasse was appointed as one of the *kercken neghen*, the "church nine", to inspect the church tabernacle. The new sacrament house was inaugurated as early as the summer of 1568. Van Vaernewijck was positive about it and remarked that thanks to the generous gifts of the parishioners, the church was now in a better state than before the iconoclasm.<sup>565</sup> Clearly, other things than "just" the tabernacle had undergone restoration work by the summer of 1568. His own efforts in organizing the repairs would have contributed considerably to this relative success. While the restoration had been quicker in some of the other Ghent churches, as the example of St John illustrates, compared to the time it took to construct tabernacles in many other towns, this was indeed fast. The construction of a tabernacle in the Buurkerk in Utrecht in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century had taken over four years.<sup>566</sup> Diemen, a small village near Utrecht did not have the means to build a monumental sacrament tower in

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<sup>563</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 91-92 (III).

<sup>564</sup> Van Bruaene, Jonckheere, and Suykerbuyk, 'Introduction. Beeldenstorm: Iconoclasm in the Sixteenth-Century Low Countries'; Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, Koenraad Jonckheere, and Ruben Suykerbuyk, 'Beeldenstorm. Iconoclasm in the Sixteenth-Century Low Countries', *Bijdragen En Mededelingen Betreffende de Geschiedenis Der Nederlanden* 131, no. 1 (n.d.): 50.

<sup>565</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 203-204 (IV); Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, 175 (II).

<sup>566</sup> Bogaers, *Aards, Betrokken En Zelfbewust. De Verwevenheid van Cultuur En Religie in Katholiek Utrecht, 1300-1600*, 396-97; Van Bruaene, Jonckheere, and Suykerbuyk, 'Beeldenstorm. Iconoclasm in the Sixteenth-Century Low Countries', 54.

its parish church, and bought a second hand tabernacle, most likely from Our Lady in Utrecht that had ordered a brand new tabernacle in 1516.<sup>567</sup>

Urgency and political will were important factors. The restoration of St James in Antwerp, for example, had been taken seriously after the Troubles and the suffragan bishop consecrated the church's 18 altars as early as July 1568. Moreover, the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament in this church, which housed the church's sacrament house, was restored within a year of the end of the iconoclasm without the need for political intervention.<sup>568</sup> A more detailed comparison is difficult as this would need to take into account the design and size of each restoration, but clearly certain groups were strongly motivated to restore their church's tabernacle after the destruction of 1566.

The importance of a quick restoration of the tabernacle was strengthened by parish pride, but the symbolic meaning and specific use of the sacrament house definitely played a role as well. As early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century, one can see the importance of the Eucharist and the veneration of the host in the rise and spread of the celebration of the Feast of Corpus Christi, often accompanied by Corpus Christi processions in many towns. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the usual sacrament houses became more and more imposing, and as such they became essential features of many churches. According to Timmermann, this was partly in answer to the Hussite heresy, which had demanded greater access to the Eucharist. The role of the sacrament house was to focus the attention of the churchgoers on the Eucharist, even when mass was not being celebrated. The verticality of this piece of micro-architecture, together with its sculpted and decorated scenes, worked to strengthen the message of salvation through the Eucharist and to convince the participants of the real presence of the body of Christ in the Eucharist.<sup>569</sup>

The precise meaning of the Eucharist was central to many debates between Catholics and 16<sup>th</sup>-century Protestants. Protestants denied the real presence of Christ in the host and, as a result, Catholics would accentuate the doctrine of transubstantiation and encourage the veneration of the consecrated host. The sacrament houses are physical

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<sup>567</sup> Elizabeth Den Hartog, 'In Gruzelementen. Resten van Een Utrechts Sacramentshuis Uit de Mariakerk van Diemen', *Bulletin KNOB* 116, no. 1 (2017): 1–19.

<sup>568</sup> Muller, *St. Jacob's Antwerp Art and Counter Reformation in Rubens's Parish Church*, 33, 191.

<sup>569</sup> Ruben Suykerbuyk and Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, 'Towering Piety. Sacrament Houses, Local Patronage and an Early Counter Reformation Spirit in the Low Countries (1520–1566)', in *Netherlandish Sculpture of the 16th Century*, ed. Ethan Matt Kavalar, Frits Scholten, and Joanna Woodall, *Netherlandish Yearbook for History of Art* 67 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2017), 119–28; Achim Timmermann, *Real Presence: Sacrament Houses and the Body of Christ c. 1270–1600*, *Architectura Medii Aevi* 4 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), XIII, 1–10; Achim Timmermann, 'A View of the Eucharist on the Eve of the Protestant Reformation', in *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Reformation*, ed. Lee Palmer Wandel, 46 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2014), 365–97.

affirmations of this doctrine.<sup>570</sup> Suykerbuyk and Van Bruaene show that between the 1530s and 1560s, the defence of Catholic doctrine against Protestant ideas had played an important role in a new boom in tabernacles in Flanders and Brabant. Even though many tabernacles of the 16<sup>th</sup> century remained rather traditional (Gothic style), the replacement of many older tabernacles in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century revealed the wish to renew the form of the tabernacles that symbolized these contested beliefs. In this period, flamboyant Gothic and gradually the antique style became the style of choice for these sculptures.<sup>571</sup>

Both Van Vaernewijck and Van Campene believed that sacrament houses were especially targeted by iconoclasts and related this in their accounts. According to Cornelis Van Campene, the iconoclasm had destroyed all the sacrament houses in Antwerp. Similarly, Van Vaernewijck says all the tabernacles in the Ghent churches were smashed, which other accounts confirm.<sup>572</sup> The focus on the reconstruction of the ornate tabernacle after the iconoclasm can thus also be seen in the light of reaffirming Catholic doctrine in the face of Protestant opposition. It was an active response to the destructive wave of the *Beeldenstorm* and to reformed ideas.<sup>573</sup> As such, both the construction of tabernacles in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century and the quick restoration after iconoclasm fit in seamlessly with the attitudes at the core of Counter-Reformation. In fact, after the reaffirmation of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist by the Council of Trent, the Eucharist gradually became an important symbol of Counter-Reformation. As a result, sacrament houses would also play a significant role in the punishment and reconciliation of heretics.<sup>574</sup>

If Eucharist meant salvation to the individual believer and brought about the real presence of Jesus in a person's life, its importance as a rite was enough to secure its continuation. Contested or not, according to the Catholic faith this rite could change the lives of individual parishioners and was necessary for every believer. Honouring the rite

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<sup>570</sup> Suykerbuyk and Van Bruaene, 'Towering Piety. Sacrament Houses, Local Patronage and an Early Counter Reformation Spirit in the Low Countries (1520-1566)', 122-23.

<sup>571</sup> Suykerbuyk and Van Bruaene, 137.

<sup>572</sup> Van Bruaene, Jonckheere, and Suykerbuyk, 'Beeldenstorm. Iconoclasm in the Sixteenth-Century Low Countries', 52-54; de Boer, 'Picking up the Pieces. Catholic Material Culture and Iconoclasm in the Low Countries', 61-63. De Boer explains why so little attention was paid to the destruction of the (consecrated) host.

<sup>573</sup> Van Bruaene, 'Embodied Piety. Sacrament Houses and Iconoclasm in the Sixteenth-Century Low Countries', 47.

<sup>574</sup> Suykerbuyk and Van Bruaene, 'Towering Piety. Sacrament Houses, Local Patronage and an Early Counter Reformation Spirit in the Low Countries (1520-1566)', 122-23; Timmermann, *Real Presence: Sacrament Houses and the Body of Christ c. 1270-1600*, 324-27; Robert J. Daly, 'The Council of Trent', in *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Reformation*, ed. Lee Palmer Wandel, Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition 46 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2014), 159-82.

of mass was not only to counter the Reformation, but also and primarily to counter sin in Catholic lives and thus avert the wrath of God. Furthermore, the sacrament house offered the possibility of visual communion. Even when the sacrament was not distributed, the faithful could receive it through the sense of sight.<sup>575</sup> This leads us to a second architectural element that interacts with the visuals of the most important rite in the church, namely the rood screen.

### The rood screen

We lack further details on the rebuilding of the rood screen or choir screen, but in his account Van Vaernewijck related the catalogue of damage inflicted during the iconoclastic wave of 1566. The large cross with Jesus had been flung down and the statues of St John and Our Lady had also been severely damaged. Furthermore, the various statues of the apostles with Jesus, which stood before the rood screen, had been attacked and had holes in them.<sup>576</sup> After the iconoclasm, Van Vaernewijck, the other churchwardens and the pastor organized a large collection for the repairs. The main focus of the repairs to be undertaken and paid for, besides the tabernacle, was the rood screen.<sup>577</sup>

The rood screen separated the chancel from the nave and originally consisted of two elements: a platform stretching over the entire width of the nave (tribune) and a wall or enclosure beneath it. This element of division is closely connected with the historical separation between laity and clergy. The chancel was considered an area for priests alone, while the nave was for the laity. The first dividing line was created by balustrades or a high beam supported by pillars. Later on, statues and images of saints, usually the apostles, were attached to these pillars. Often a large triumphal cross, accompanied by the statues of Mary and John, were added to the beam. Later rood screens adopted this iconographic tradition.<sup>578</sup> The separation created by the rood screen enabled the church to be used for different services at the same time. In cathedrals, convents and collegial churches, rood screens appeared from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Often a separate altar was placed in front of the rood screen for services for the laity, while the chancel altar was used simultaneously for the clergy and for the liturgy of the hours. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, parish churches in the Netherlands also started building rood screens.<sup>579</sup>

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<sup>575</sup> Timmermann, *Real Presence: Sacrament Houses and the Body of Christ c. 1270-1600*, 3.

<sup>576</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 149-150 (I).

<sup>577</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 347, fo 11 ro.

<sup>578</sup> Jan Steppe, *Het Koordoksaal in de Nederlanden*, *Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Academie Voor Wetenschappen, Letteren En Schone Kunsten van België, Klasse Der Schone Kunsten 7* (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1952), 19-21.

<sup>579</sup> Steppe, 23-31.

When people ordered items for the church, they often referred to other existing pieces of furniture or architecture. Some contracts lack a description of the ordered object, but simply refer to another existing architectural creation and ask that the new design be better than that. The materials had to be of the best quality.<sup>580</sup> In 1559, on the occasion of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Chapter of the Golden Fleece, a new rood screen was built and installed at St Bavo's in Ghent. The Ghent sculptor Jan de Heere designed it and it definitely influenced the design of other rood screens in the Southern Netherlands, such as in Antwerp and Brussels. Maybe the new rood screen to be erected in St James was also inspired by the monumental screen of St Bavo's, which had escaped serious damage during the first iconoclasm? We lack the sources to verify this.<sup>581</sup>

It is interesting to note that the repair of the rood screen was considered as much a priority as the tabernacle. Although Van Vaernewijck did not describe its restoration in the detail he had devoted to the tabernacle, the rood screen had a prominent place in the repairs, as the collection for money recorded in the accounts of 1568-1569 also proves. The repairs to the rood screen of St James began relatively fast. Also after the church was damaged during the Calvinist Republic, the churchwardens were quick to start organizing repairs to the rood screen. The function of the rood screen was not questioned at St James.<sup>582</sup> During the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the role and importance of the rood screen would evolve as liturgical ideas changed. The Council of Trent stressed the importance of the sacraments and Holy Mass. Seeing the high altar and the Holy Mass became essential for Catholicism and this gradually led to the removal of rood screens in churches from the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century onwards.<sup>583</sup>

In fact, seeing the Eucharist and especially the elevation of the host had also been of great importance in the High and Late Middle Ages. Even before Lateran IV decreed the ritual of elevation and introduced the feast of Corpus Christi in 1215, the ritual of *elevatio hostiae* had already been prescribed by church officials in certain areas. Witnessing this sacrament was understood to have spiritual benefits for the believers even if they did not receive the Eucharist. Medieval and early modern Catholics would maintain that they

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<sup>580</sup> Steppe, 49, 56.

<sup>581</sup> Steppe, 239–41; Anne-Laure Van Bruaene, 'The Last Chapter of the Golden Fleece (Ghent 1559). Burgundian Ritual, Church Space and Urban Lieux de Mémoire', *Dutch Crossing* 43, no. 1 (2019): 15.

<sup>582</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs, no 346, fo 16 ro; no 357, fo 18 vo, 24 ro; no 358, fo 18 vo; no 362, fo 26 ro; no 368, fo 39 vo, 40 ro.

<sup>583</sup> Steppe, *Het Koordoksaal in de Nederlanden*, 43–47; Angela D. Glover, 'Keeping Body and Soul Together. Sixteenth-Century Choir Stalls in the Low Countries', in *Netherlandish Sculpture of the 16th Century*, ed. Ethan Matt Kavalier, Frits Scholten, and Joanna Woodall, *Netherlandish Yearbook for History of Art* 67 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2017), 194; Spicer, 'Sites of the Eucharist', 328–31.



were observing not just bread, but the body of Christ itself.<sup>584</sup> Indeed, for many parishioners seeing the host during its elevation was the high point in their experience of Mass. To enhance the prominence of the host, various furnishings and practices, such as the lighting of torches and the ringing of a bell, were added to the ritual. Depending on its design, those parishioners near the rood screen might have had their view of the host blocked. However, this did not seem to have been its goal, and many screens had “elevation squints” that allowed people to follow the ritual at the high altar.<sup>585</sup> Rood screens also sometimes had a “tribune”, enabling elite parishioners to see the high altar better from this elevated position.<sup>586</sup>

Mass was important for both traditional Christians and Tridentine-inspired Catholics. Both the building of rood screens and later on their removal were contemporary answers to the question of how to give the Eucharist a central position and keep it sacred, and how to honour the divine office. In the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Catholics at St James did not seem to want the rood screen to be removed. On the contrary, this element remained important enough to be a priority for restoration after its destruction by rebels. This was also the case for many other churches in the region in this period. Even churches with scarce funds usually rebuilt the rood screen.<sup>587</sup>

These first observations point to a policy in the local church government of focusing more on continuity and a quick recovery and less on renewal. The destruction did not lead to a reinvention of styles or new architectural and sculptural designs. Continuity of existing traditions and practices seemed to be the main object. However, this continuity of Catholic traditions was happening in the context of contested ideas. As such, the wish to continue and promote traditional liturgy and devotion was an active and clear statement in a society that was becoming more and more polarized. The tabernacle and rood screen had been elements questioned by Protestants. The fact that these were now considered a priority highlights the clear direction of thinking underpinning the restoration works: church practice was not to be altered and continuity was central. In particular, those practices that had been questioned by Protestants over the past half century were considered important.

The regular increase in expenditure resulting from the restoration works and repairs did not alter the parish in a structural way. Most ordinary expense and income categories remained stable until the rise of the Calvinist Republic. The works and replacements were not meant to alter church practice, but neither were they quick temporary solutions that

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<sup>584</sup> Timmermann, *Real Presence: Sacrament Houses and the Body of Christ c. 1270-1600*, 3–4; Bogaers, Aards, *Betrokken En Zelfbewust. De Verwevenheid van Cultuur En Religie in Katholiek Utrecht, 1300-1600*, 205, 209.

<sup>585</sup> Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580*, 95–98; Timmermann, *Real Presence: Sacrament Houses and the Body of Christ c. 1270-1600*, 3–5.

<sup>586</sup> Steppe, *Het Koordoksaal in de Nederlanden*, 23–27.

<sup>587</sup> Muller, *St. Jacob's Antwerp Art and Counter Reformation in Rubens's Parish Church*, 87.

lacked ideological vision. Van Vaernewijck's report of and involvement in the first repairs, especially the tabernacle, reveal how important these repairs were for the Catholic community. Moreover, the intricate work that went into creating the priests' vestments and church textiles, made out of expensive fabrics, illustrate that honourable and alluring church services that respected the parish church as well as Catholicism were very important. However, in comparison with what happened after 1584, the restoration of St James after the first iconoclasm could be easily overlooked.

## **4.3 The repairs after 1584**

### **4.3.1 The Calvinist Republic and Counter-Reformation**

The Pacification of Ghent in 1576 had agreed to permit public services of the Calvinist religion only in Holland and Zeeland, but things turned out very differently in Ghent. Refugees that had fled Flanders to escape persecution because of their Protestant faith returned to the Netherlands and had a strong influence on the politics and religion in Ghent. In October 1577, three Protestant preachers preached in Ghent, albeit secretly. When on 1 November the revolutionary Committee of Eighteen took over power in Ghent, they immediately restored public Calvinist services. Ghent would take a course that marked the following years as the most radical period of the Revolt. By the beginning of 1578, Ghent preachers had started to spread the Protestant message to other Flemish towns. The Council of Flanders rejected this public acceptance of Calvinism, but Ghent refused to recognize their authority on this matter. The divide between Catholics and Protestants grew and the Ghent City Council radicalized further, mistrusting the Catholic clergy. Ghent witnessed new attacks on the Catholic church, especially on the regular orders such as the Augustinians, Carmelites, Franciscans and Dominicans, who were considered dangerous. Stories of sodomitical practices further fuelled hatred against them. From 18 to 22 May 1578 (*Pinksterstorm*) the four Ghent cloisters were sacked and eventually closed. Shortly after this event, the buildings were transformed and used for Calvinist services. Although William of Orange did not agree with this course of action, Ghent refused to compromise. On the contrary, by August 1578 Protestant ministers were

also preaching in the parish churches of other Flemish towns occupied by Ghent. Catholic worship was made very difficult, if not impossible.<sup>588</sup>

The offer of a religious peace by William of Orange in November 1578 was rejected and led to a new outbreak of iconoclasm in the churches of Ghent. The Ghent government then refused the request of the States General that Catholics be allowed to use the churches. In opposition to this radicalism a more moderate faction rose up in Ghent, which decided to welcome William of Orange to Ghent in December 1578 and issue a religious peace by the end of that month. However, after his departure from Ghent the peace was annulled and once again Catholics were not allowed to use churches. The spring and summer of 1579 were extremely difficult months for the Catholics. In August 1579 William of Orange returned to Ghent and was able to remove Jan van Hembyze, the radical leader from the Ghent magistrate. It was only then that Ghent adopted a more moderate policy on religion. However, Hembyze regained power in Ghent during the last year of the Calvinist Republic (1584) and set the city back on a radical course. It took military action by the King's army to bring down the Republic. Spanish forces led by Alexander Farnese, the duke of Parma, marched on Ghent and the city capitulated on 17 September 1584. This marked the end of the public acceptance of the Calvinist religion and the start of the restoration of the Catholic church.<sup>589</sup>

In Ghent, all the churches had been damaged and desecrated, except for the hospital chapel of St Elisabeth beguinage. Furthermore, during the period of Calvinist rule, church goods, such as bells, had been stolen for the manufacturing of weapons. Public displays of devotion, such as processions and bell ringing, had been prohibited.<sup>590</sup> Even quieter acts of public Catholic devotion, such as celebrating mass had been punished during the most radical years of the Calvinist Republic. The iconoclasm of 1578 destroyed what had been repaired or bought for St James after the first iconoclasm, including the church tabernacle, new organ, repaired altars and windows. Religious art objects that had been kept safely hidden in 1566 and survived the first iconoclasm were destroyed this time. Furthermore, after the destruction the church was a mess for weeks. It was also used as a shelter for horses and cattle. The short period when parishioners had been allowed to use the church for Catholic worship was not enough to allow restoration.<sup>591</sup> The church

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<sup>588</sup> Decavele and Coigneau, *Het Eind van Een Rebelse Droom. Opstellen over Het Calvinistisch Bewind Te Gent (1577-1584) En de Terugkeer van de Stad Onder de Gehoorzaamheid van de Koning van Spanje (17 September 1584)*, 40–51; Van Bruaene, 'A Religious Republic and Fortress', 7.

<sup>589</sup> Decavele and Coigneau, *Het Eind van Een Rebelse Droom. Opstellen over Het Calvinistisch Bewind Te Gent (1577-1584) En de Terugkeer van de Stad Onder de Gehoorzaamheid van de Koning van Spanje (17 September 1584)*, 51–60, 112; Van Bruaene, 'Les Républiques Calvinistes (1577-1585)', 88.

<sup>590</sup> Cloet, *Het Bisdom Gent (1559-1991). Vier Eeuwen Geschiedenis.*, 48; Decavele, 'Gent, Calvinistisch En Republikeins Strijdcentrum in de Nederlandse Opstand (1577-1584)', 77–78.

<sup>591</sup> Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, (II) 183.

building and interior had thus remained damaged and unprotected against wind and rain for several years.

The period after the fall of the Calvinist Republic was a chaotic one and the literature so far has focused more on the renewal brought about by the archdukes Albert and Isabella (1598-1621), and less on what happened in the immediate aftermath of the period of Calvinist rule.<sup>592</sup> Even Muller's recent case study of St James in Antwerp points to the rather slow start of the restoration works and mainly centres on the large building works that only took off in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This restoration must have been spectacular; at the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the other Antwerp churches felt neglected in comparison to St James in terms of the funding needed to restore their churches.<sup>593</sup> However, Muller does give insight in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century as well. Although only a small part of Muller's book focusses on this period, his discussion of the restoration of the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament illustrates that at least one group of Catholics was highly motivated and active in the period following 1585. Although he considers the quick restoration of this chapel to be an exception in the overall process of Counter-Reformation change in the aftermath of the Calvinist Republic in Antwerp, this and other restoration works at St James in Antwerp speak volumes. The title of Muller's chapter on the restoration during the period 1585-1603 is "Response to Bare necessity", but clearly more than just the bare necessities were tackled during this period. Counter-Reformation ideas come to the fore in various ways as he discusses the first restoration works undertaken.<sup>594</sup> This early period of material renewal in St James in Ghent is the topic in the section below.

### 4.3.2 The cost of restoration after 1584

Restoration after 1584 was totally different from the repairs after the first iconoclasm of 1566. The previous chapter discussed the finances of the first restoration and the various ways the parish collected income for the repairs. After 1584 income grew and this increasing trend is also visible in the expenditure of the ordinary churchwarden accounts after 1584. Here, the category 'miscellaneous expenses' increased sharply and after the period of Calvinist rule it became the main category in the total annual expenditure of the churchwardens. The total annual expenditure would remain above 200 pounds, in absolute numbers, at least until 1590. This was multiple times the expenditure of the churchwardens in the period 1562-1584, when they spent on average a little more than 35 pounds. Figure 15 below illustrates the growing importance of the category

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<sup>592</sup> See general introduction and introduction chapter three.

<sup>593</sup> Muller, *St. Jacob's Antwerp Art and Counter Reformation in Rubens's Parish Church*, 34-38.

<sup>594</sup> Muller, 67-85, 192-198.

‘miscellaneous expenses’ in the accounts. It alone is responsible for the rise in the total expenditure, as ordinary expenses decreased.

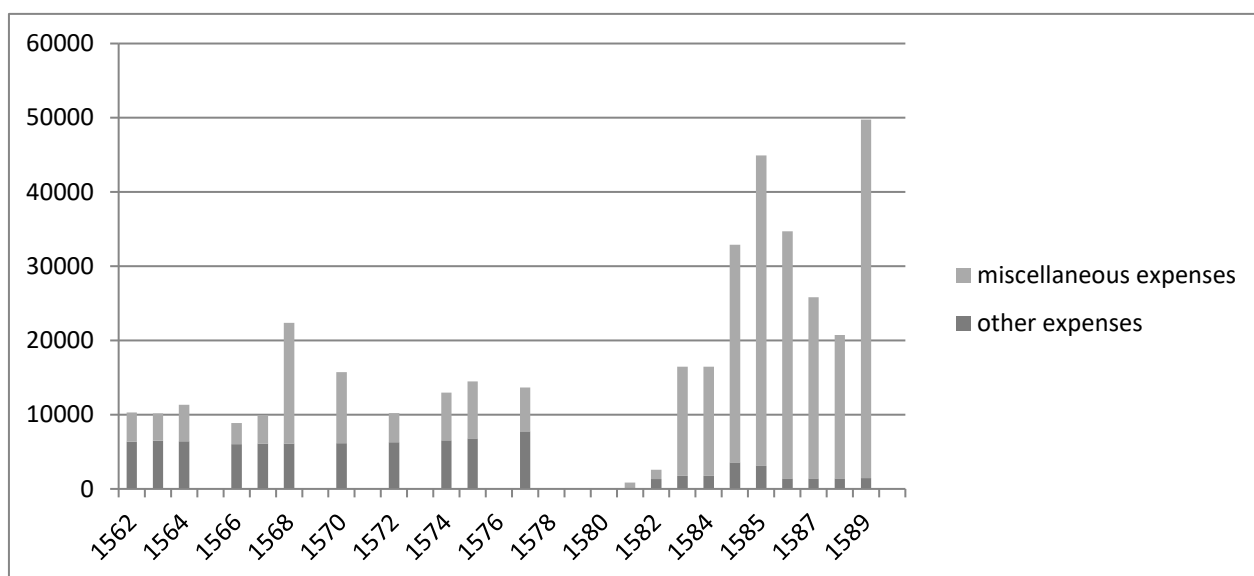


Figure 15 Graph share of 'miscellaneous expenses' in the total annual expenditure of the ordinary churchwarden accounts of St James in Flemish deniers groten (1562-1590)<sup>595</sup>

The growth in miscellaneous expenses can be almost entirely explained by the increase in the payments the churchwardens made for repairs. Whereas after the iconoclasm of 1566 the first repairs were not mentioned in the records until two years later, the first repairs after Calvinist rule were registered in the accounts immediately. In the ordinary churchwarden accounts of 1583-1585, St James spent about the same amount of money on repairs as it had done in the much-discussed accounting year 1568-1569. In the following accounting year (1585-1586), the expenditure on repairs and materials was more than double that of the first set of accounts (114 pounds). Moreover, this did not include everything as there was a separate restoration account for 1584-1586, which recorded many more repairs.<sup>596</sup> Restoration works at St James church and the repayment of loans totalled an additional 950 pounds in the two years following the fall of the Calvinistic Republic. In the ordinary accounts too, part of the expenditure was on the repayment of loans contracted with parishioners in the previous years.<sup>597</sup>

The years that followed 1586 show a gradual decrease in expenses for repairs, but at least until 1590 the money spent on repairs alone amounted to more than the median of the total annual expenditure of St James in the twenty years before 1584. The fact that

<sup>595</sup> The expenditure of the accounts of the two year period 1583-1585 are divided over two years in this graph.

<sup>596</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 25.

<sup>597</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, Churchwarden accounts 357, fo 28 vo.

expenditure in the ordinary categories dropped in the first years after the Calvinist Republic and that transactions for repairs and loans increased in absolute terms again illustrates that inflation was not responsible for the rise in expenditure. The normal functioning of the church had received a body blow and this showed in the diminished expenses for masses, candles and wax. Restoring the church building had become the top priority.

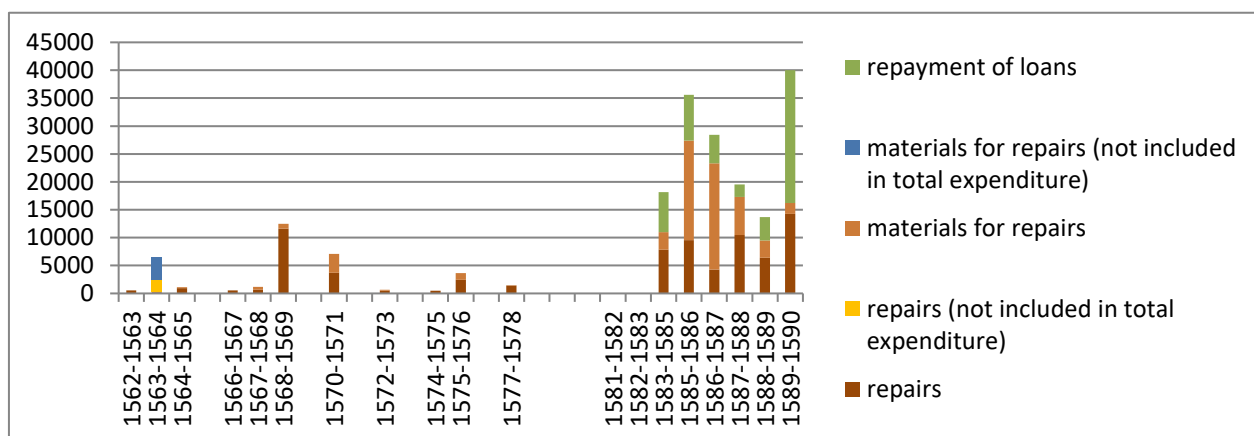


Figure 16 Expenses paid by the churchwardens of St James for repairs and the repayment of loans in Flemish deniers groten per set of accounts (1562-1590) (based on the ordinary churchwarden accounts only)

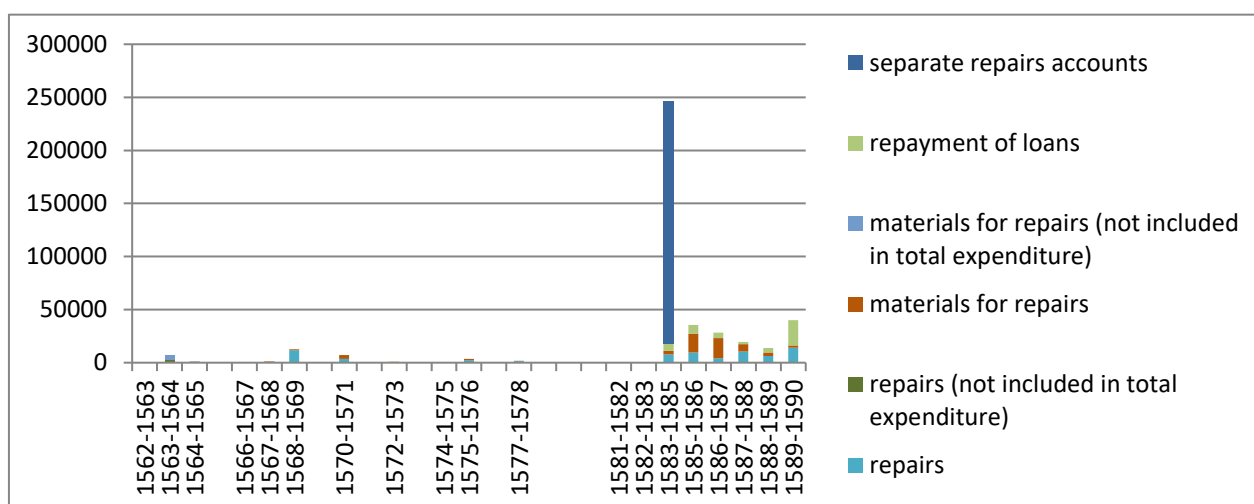


Figure 17 Graph expenses paid by the churchwardens of St James for repairs and the repayment of loans in Flemish deniers groten per set of accounts (1562-1590) (includes the separate repairs accounts of 1584-1586)<sup>598</sup>

<sup>598</sup> The expenditure registered in the special repairs accounts of 1584-1586 was added to the expenditure of the ordinary churchwarden accounts of 1583-1585. See figure 18 below.

Figure 17 shows the same information as Figure 16, but here the amounts registered in the separate accounts of 1584-1586, specifically for repairs, are included to show the significance of these expenses. Both graphs clearly illustrate the intensity of the repair work at St James and the sharp increase in expenditure after 1584. Graph 17 illustrates the extraordinary situation in 1584-1586, when expenditure skyrocketed to never before seen heights. The separate 1584-1586 accounts recorded the first repairs that took place after the fall of the Calvinist Republic. The timeline for these repairs is shown in more detail in Figure 18.

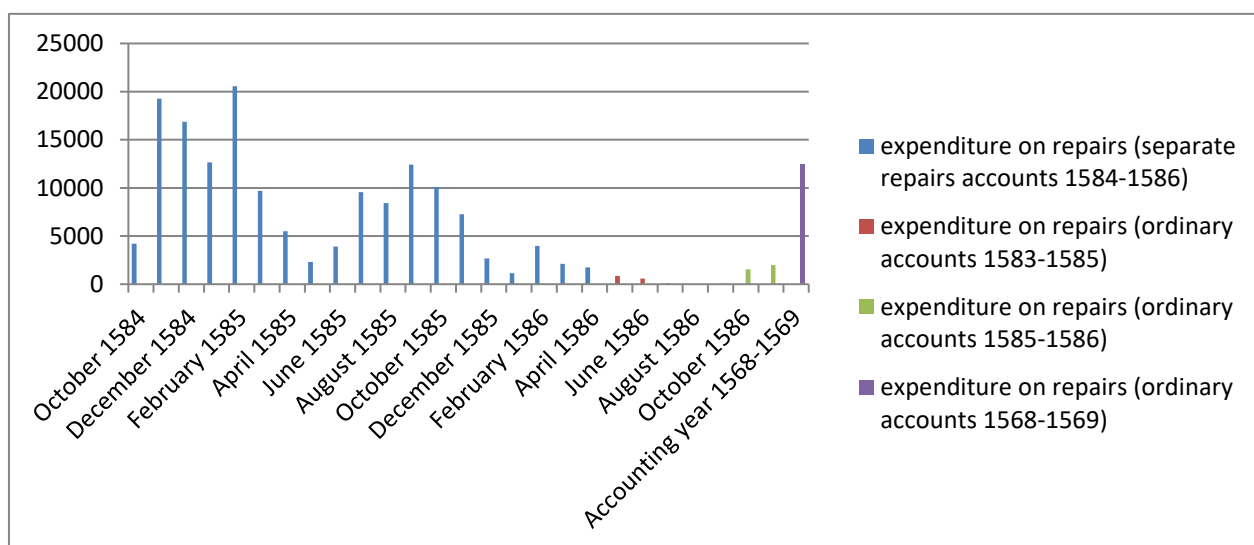


Figure 18 Graph monthly expenditure on the repairs at St James in Flemish deniers groten, registered in the various accounts (1584-1586) + expenditure on the repairs of 1568-1569.

Figure 18 illustrates the expenditure on repairs per month, for the two first years following the Reconquista. It is important to note that the data from the separate repairs accounts of 1584-1586 are relatively complete as almost every transaction registered was dated. This is not the case for the churchwarden accounts of 1583-1585 and 1585-1586, where the share of the expenditure that is not linked to a specific month is not shown in the graph. Thus, for the period from May 1586 to October 1586, the expenditure portrayed in Graph 18 should be considered a minimum rather than the exact amount spent on repairs during those months. Nevertheless, the amounts would have been less than those in the previous period. The graph further illustrates that the churchwarden accounts that officially covered the period 1583-1585 also registered the repairs of the first half of 1586, and the 1585-1586 accounts include the repairs of the second half of 1586. The repairs mentioned in these accounts thus follow on chronologically from the repairs recorded in the separate repairs accounts of 1584-1586. For comparison, Figure

18 includes the highest amount spent on repairs before 1584, namely in the accounting year 1568-1569. Interestingly, this shows that the amount spent on the restoration of the church in one year after the first iconoclasm is comparable to that spent in one month after 1584. Inflation played a minor role in this development, but does not explain the considerable increase in expenditure.

If we compare the monthly expenditure on repairs with the large collections held in that period for St James, we see a clear link. The first general and largest collection took place in November 1584 and the second smaller one in September 1585. Indeed, the expenditure on repairs shows a sharp increase from November 1584 to February 1585. A smaller but clear rise is also seen in the expenditure between July and November 1585, with a peak in September, the month that the collection took place. Thus there is an evident link between the collection of income by the churchwardens and the increase in repairs.

#### **4.3.3 The first repairs – the separate repairs accounts of 1584-1586**

The finding that repairs started right away is confirmed by the reconciliation of St James church by the archbishop of Malines in December 1584.<sup>599</sup> This proves that most of the urgent repairs had already been carried out by then. We do not have an eyewitness account describing the destruction of St James during the Calvinist Republic. It is mainly through the study of the repairs that we know what was destroyed. The churchwarden accounts recorded some of the details of the restoration works organized by the churchwardens. Sometimes parishioners had a clear idea of what their donation should be used for and this was registered in the accounts as well.

As seen above, the separate repairs accounts of 1584-1586 recorded the first repairs following Ghent's surrender to Farnese. These accounts are very extensive, with the expenditure section registering more than 600 transactions relating to repairs to the church. These transactions included payments for work and purchases of materials, and the expenditure totalled 951 pounds (228,240 Flemish deniers groten). In 415 transactions, the accounts mention the workmen and their specific profession, which enables me to analyse the type of work being done. Where the transactions mention materials or specific works, I use these data as well. These data are summarized in the table below.

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<sup>599</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 357, fo 26 vo.



Table 3 Overview of transactions in the separate repairs accounts of 1584-1586, focusing on the workmen and materials that took up the largest share of the expenditure<sup>600</sup>

workmen	materials/work	transactions	total paid (deniers)
	plumbing, lead, candles	13	70,805
	(roof) tiles and nails	43	36,680
mason		89	27,522
	sand, stones, gravel		25,690
roof worker		66	24,550
	wood and wood constructions	56	16,767
carpenter		34	13,846
	chalk	4	9,640
	smaller repairs and purchase of materials		5,212
stonecutter		20	4,661
	windows	12	3,846
	purchase of furniture and religious objects		3,345
smiths, tin worker, wood turner		10	2,942
church bailiff		23	1,583

Table 3 gives an initial general overview of which works had priority during the first phase of the church restoration. Apart from the bailiff, who was involved in various repairs and works, most professions can be closely linked to specific repairs. The same is true for the materials and the work performed by labourers.

The profession most often recorded was that of mason. Masons earned over 114 pounds for their labour in various projects, including the foundations of the tower, repairing holes, the walls of the sanctuary and the side chapels. However, the specific location or object of repairs is rarely mentioned. Their work involved using materials from the categories ‘sand, stones, gravel’ and ‘chalk’. Gravel, in particular, and certain paving stones (*paveerstenen*) were used to raise and lay the floor of the church. Apart from unspecified labourers (not included in Table 3), the craftsmen usually employed to lay

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<sup>600</sup>In a few cases, the labour of the workmen and the purchase of materials were combined in one transaction. This means that there are a few overlaps between the expenditure sorted by profession and expenditure sorted by materials or repairs. As a result, these amounts added up are a little more than the total expenditure in the accounts.

the floor were the stonecutters. They were also involved in some of the projects requiring more detailed masonry work. In total, they earned a little less than 20 pounds during this period.

Other works frequently recorded (66 transactions) in the 1584-1586 accounts relate to the covering of roof areas. In this first phase, various roof workers were paid a total of 102 pounds and over 153 pounds was spent on purchasing large numbers of tiles and nails. Interestingly, one large expense linked to the roof was the purchase of lead for the restoration of the gutters. This work also required the services of a plumber and some smaller purchases of candles for soldering. The work and materials together came to 295 pounds, a record expense and a little less than one-third of the total spent on repairs during this first phase. This amount was in fact even higher as one purchase of lead was combined with the repayment of a loan and was not added to this analysis. Most of the work carried out by the carpenters, who received a total of over 57 pounds, was also related to roof construction, especially for the tower crossing. Often the transactions for the purchase of wood mentioned the carpenters as well. This means that about two-thirds of the huge expenditure on repairs went on the roof and gutters of the church.

The churchwardens also organized the replacement of windows and the purchase and installation of furniture and religious objects. Table 4 gives details on which locations in the church and which objects underwent transformation as a result of the restoration works.

Table 4 Analysis of transactions in the separate repairs account of 1584-1586, focusing on the location in the church or object that underwent restoration.

location in the church or object	detail	expenditure (deniers)	month repairs started	month repairs ended
<b>high altar</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>1,489.50</b>	<b>Dec-84</b>	<b>Sep-85</b>
high chancel	roof		Oct-84	Nov-84
high chancel	floor		Dec-84	Apr-85
high chancel	windows		Apr-85	Nov-85
high chancel	seating, wardrobe, etc.		Sep-85	
<b>high chancel</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>7,271</b>	<b>Oct-84</b>	<b>Sep-85</b>
chapels	roof and masonry of side chapels chancel		Jan-85	
chapels	masonry of chapels and crossing		Jul-85	
chapels	roof of 5 chapels (and tower)		Aug-85	Feb-86
<b>chapels</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>2,657</b>	<b>Jan-85</b>	<b>Feb-86</b>
church doors	small repairs		Oct-84	Nov-85
church doors	large replacements		Nov-85	Dec-85

location in the church or object	detail	expenditure (deniers)	month repairs started	month repairs ended
church doors	floor near north porch		Apr-86	
<b>church doors</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>1,196</b>	<b>Oct-84</b>	<b>Apr-86</b>
<b>churchyard</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>Oct-85</b>	<b>Nov-85</b>
crossing	masonry		Apr-85	Jul-85
crossing	roof (carpentry and covering)		Jul-85	Oct-85
<b>crossing</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>8,522</b>	<b>Apr-85</b>	<b>Oct-85</b>
sanctuary	small repairs		Oct-84	Nov-84
sanctuary	floor		Jan-85	
sanctuary	roof and masonry		Feb-85	Mar-85
sanctuary	interior: wardrobe, door		Mar-85	Sep-85
sanctuary	gutters and windows		Oct-85	Nov-85
<b>sanctuary</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>1,887</b>	<b>Oct-84</b>	<b>Nov-85</b>
<b>room poor relief</b>	<b>total (roof)</b>	<b>746</b>	<b>Dec-85</b>	<b>Apr-86</b>
narthex	roof		Dec-84	
narthex	arcs		May-85	Jul-85
narthex	interior		Nov-85	
<b>narthex</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>5,970</b>	<b>Dec-84</b>	<b>Nov-85</b>
<b>roof (unspecified)</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>26,291</b>	<b>whole period</b>	
tower (crossing)	foundations		Oct-84	Nov-84
tower (West?)	door near baptismal font		Dec-84	
tower (crossing)	roof (carpentry and covering)		Mar-85	Jan-86
<b>tower</b>	<b>total</b>	<b>4,523</b>	<b>Oct-84</b>	<b>Jan-86</b>
furniture, church interior	stones in altars		Feb-85	
<b>furniture, church interior</b>	<b>subtotal</b>	<b>1088</b>	<b>Feb-85</b>	<b>Mar-86</b>
<b>furniture, church interior</b>	<b>pulpit</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>Sep-85</b>	
<b>furniture, church interior</b>	<b>lecterns near pulpit and three pulpits</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>Sep-85</b>	
<b>furniture, church interior</b>	<b>lectern in high choir</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>Mar-86</b>	
<b>baptismal font and holy water font</b>		<b>895</b>	<b>Apr-85</b>	<b>Sep-85</b>

In order to visualize the restoration works that St James underwent during the various phases, I superimposed the information in Table 4 on a scale model of the church, which can be consulted in Figure 30 in the appendix. This illustrates the priorities in the restoration of the building of St James after the fall of the Calvinist Republic. Below I briefly discuss some of the major structural works, including the most important repairs that occurred between 1586 and 1600 and were recorded in the ordinary churchwarden accounts. After this rather descriptive timeline of repairs, I focus on those repairs closely linked to important religious practice.

#### 4.3.4 Restoration works, 1584-1600

As the accounts show, the repairs to the roof were very consequential after 1584, as they had been in the years following 1566. The separate repairs accounts of 1584-1586 already recorded huge numbers of transactions for work on the roof. The first ordinary churchwarden accounts after the end of Calvinist Republic also mention the roof; more than 4,600 roof tiles were bought for about 3 pounds and another 3 pounds and 10 shillings were spent on nails. Furthermore, at least three different roof workers were involved in the work. One of them, Jan van Zele, died before being paid. His widow received the payment of 20 shillings.<sup>601</sup> The following year, the roof worker Omaer de Ruddere delivered 2,700 tiles, nails and work for repairing the roof of the tower and he was also responsible for the work in the high chancel. He received 14 pounds and 1 shilling for all this.<sup>602</sup> Repairs to the roof were mentioned again in the accounts of 1589-1590 and especially those of 1596-1597, when over 42 transactions for the restoration of the roof were recorded. Over 7,000 roof tiles were bought and some roof workers worked for several weeks on the church roof.<sup>603</sup> The accounts of 1596-1597 do not give subtotals for these transactions, but a total of over 45 pounds was added to the expenditure of the subsequent accounts of 1597-1598.<sup>604</sup> These extensive restoration works most likely ended the need for further work on the roof for some time. In 1599-1600, only one transaction was recorded that can be linked to roof work.<sup>605</sup>

From 1588 onwards, a lot of money went on laying the floor of the church. For this work, special blue stones were bought ("*blausteenen van Doornick*") and some were

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<sup>601</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 357, fo 29 vo- 30 vo.

<sup>602</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 358, fo 26 ro.

<sup>603</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 365, fo 67-72.

<sup>604</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 366, fo 79 ro.

<sup>605</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 369, fo 44 vo.

provided by the church of St Michael.<sup>606</sup> The work started in the side chapels, first two chapels on the north side of the church, then the south side of the church, next the nave, the first three chapels on the south side of the church, then the chapel of St Barbara, the chapel of the woodcutters and the chapel of Our Lady Behind the High Choir ("*Onse Vrouwen bachten den hooghen choir*"). During the summer of 1588, new floors were also laid in the chapel of the second-hand clothes dealers and the chapel next to the tabernacle.<sup>607</sup>

The expenditure recorded in the ordinary accounts of 1583-1585 listed payments for materials such as lime, sand, silk, lead, wood and, apart from the work on floors, work on doors and windows.<sup>608</sup> However, many of these repairs took place again and on a larger scale a decade later, which suggests that most of the work done in the first years after 1584 was damage control and rather temporary.

Work on the windows of the church was recorded in many accounts. In 1585-1586, a smaller scale, but frequently noted job was the sealing of the windows by the straw thatchers.<sup>609</sup> This was necessary to keep out the rain and cold, and to prevent further damage to broken windows.<sup>610</sup> For the work alone, the thatchers were paid almost 2 pounds. One stained glass window in the nave was fixed and work was carried out in various chapels: a stained glass window was repaired in the furriers and tanners chapel and the ironwork for the window in the chapel across from the tabernacle was repaired in 1586-1587.<sup>611</sup> During the following two years, the windows in the south transept (*cruyskercke*) and other locations were fixed. In 1590-1591, a new window was installed in the chapel of St Barbara.<sup>612</sup> The work on windows remained important, as even the 1599-1600 accounts mention repairs to several (stained) glass windows.<sup>613</sup>

Other elements in the church also underwent serious restoration work. In 1585-1586, Hans de Groeve was paid for a day's work on the portal on the south side of the church.<sup>614</sup> Several other payments followed, testimony of the work on the south portal.<sup>615</sup> That accounting year there was also work on the cross vault of the church.<sup>616</sup> In 1587-1588, an arch was erected on the north side of the choir, between the altar of the Sweet Name of Jesus and the altar of the coach builders. Work on the chancel was frequently recorded

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<sup>606</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 359, fo 26 vo, 27 ro, 28 ro.

<sup>607</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 359, fo 27 ro-30 ro.

<sup>608</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 357, fo 29 ro, 32 ro.

<sup>609</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 358, fo 22 ro, 25 ro.

<sup>610</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 358, fo 25 ro, 25 vo.

<sup>611</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 359, fo 24 ro, 25 ro, 27 ro.

<sup>612</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 363, fo 24 ro.

<sup>613</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 369, fo 42 ro.

<sup>614</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 358, fo 22 vo.

<sup>615</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 358, fo 23 ro-25 vo.

<sup>616</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 358, fo 25 vo.

in the period 1584-1600. As this restoration is directly linked to religious practice, it will be discussed in the following section, as will the restoration of the tabernacle, rood screen and bells, as these were important for the continuation of church services and other Catholic traditions.

A relatively important item taken from St James, stolen during the Calvinist Republic, was the metal holy water font. Obviously, it was known who had stolen it. As compensation, the thief Jacques Van Zele had offered the church a carpet in as early as 1583-1585, which was to be laid near the footstool of the high altar, and an additional 10 shillings.<sup>617</sup> It is not clear from the accounts if this was an informal arrangement and stemmed from Van Zele's own initiative or if this had been ordered by the court. The workman Hans de Groeve, who helped the church with various repairs, constructed a new holy water font for the church in 1585-1586.<sup>618</sup>

Although some of the other structural restoration work, such as for the roof and the chancel, was still ongoing in the late 1590s, by the late 1580s most of the urgent repairs and those that enabled the continuation of church services and liturgy were completed. This is clear from the accounts, which from 1587 onwards show a gradual decline in transactions for repairs to the church interior and an increase in those for the graveyard.<sup>619</sup> This shift gave more financial scope for the purchase of smaller items that could embellish the liturgy. The accounts of 1587-1588 recorded the purchase of 8 ells of grey linen and two black tunics with stoles and maniples.<sup>620</sup> The following year, other textiles and a chasuble was bought.<sup>621</sup> If the accounts reflect the situation correctly, there was very little restoration work between 1591 and 1593.<sup>622</sup> One possibility is that the churchwardens were saving for the building of the tabernacle in 1593. The next accounts available cover the accounting year 1596-1597, when apart from the roof project the only items mentioned are ecclesiastical vestments and paraments, and objects for liturgical worship, such as the purchase of a monstrance, a thurible and a black silk corporal burse and repairs to church vestments and silverwork.<sup>623</sup> The following accounts only

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<sup>617</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 357, fo 24 vo: *Ontfaen duer de handt van de voornoemde pastuer van Jaques van Zele boven een tapijtse datmen lecht alle hoochtijden bij tvoetbert vande hooghen autae bij vorme van recompense van het motalen wijwatervat bij hem de keercke in de troublen ontvrempt conforme den apporte bij pastuer ende keerckmeesters maect de somme van X s. gr.*

<sup>618</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 358, fo 22 vo.

<sup>619</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 360, fo 21 vo, 22 ro, 361, fo 24 ro, 362, fo 22 ro, 27 ro; 364, fo 25 ro; 365, fo 63 ro; 368, fo 41 vo.

<sup>620</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 361, fo 25 vo, 27 ro. A Flemish ell was about 68.6 cm.

<sup>621</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 362, fo 24 vo, 25 ro, 26 ro.

<sup>622</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 363, no 364, fo 24 vo-25 ro.

<sup>623</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 365, fo 63 ro-65 vo. The burse contains and protects the corporal, which is a liturgical cloth that is put on the altar during mass and on which the chalice and host are placed.

incorporated the financial settlement of the roof project of the previous year, without mentioning other repairs on the church building.<sup>624</sup> In 1598-1599, some larger restoration works started again at St James, as we shall see in the section below. Apart from the work on the chancel, rood screen and organ, there were also orders requiring finer work, such as the gilding of a pitcher and two platters.<sup>625</sup> Some more work on the church followed in 1599-1600, but nothing structural. Apart from repairs to some windows, a day's work on the roof and the laying of tiles in the tower of St Barbara, more seating was constructed, and a candlestick and the banner of Our Lady were repaired.<sup>626</sup>

In short, the various stages in the restoration works of St James church after 1584 primarily focused on the most urgent repairs. Some were major works, such as the works on the roof and the tower, while others were a temporary solution and intended to stop further damage. Other works, as we shall see, directly enabled the continuation of liturgical services. Examples are the work on the high chancel, repairs to windows, work on the altar and the purchase of a small organ. During the late 1580s, the major restoration works moved to other areas, such as paving the floor, rebuilding arches and the whitewashing of the walls of the church. In the early 1590s, the amount of restoration work fell, with the focus shifting from the interior of the church to the graveyard. Some accounts are missing, but we know that in 1593 the new tabernacle was erected, which might explain the shift in focus. In the early 1590s, new utensils necessary for the liturgical services were also bought. The final years of the 16<sup>th</sup> century witness a new boost to work on those parts of the church that had only undergone temporary repairs after 1584. Examples include the roof project, the rood screen and the choir.

## 4.4 Restoration and religious practice, 1584-1600

The repairs to the roof and other structural elements of the church building primarily signify practical work and have little symbolic meaning. They do not reflect what the parishioners valued specifically in their church or the space most important to them. The covering was simply necessary to prevent further deterioration of the church building. As we have seen, the chancel is a different story as this was, with regard to Catholic ritual, the most important space of the church. It underwent repairs in 1584 and 1585, and remained the focus of attention in the following years. Apart from unspecified work done

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<sup>624</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 366, fo 79 ro.

<sup>625</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 368, fo 40 vo.

<sup>626</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 369, fo 42 ro-45 ro.

on the chancel by the roof worker Omaer de Ruddere, the repairs mainly centred on the interior and furniture. In particular, the altar, rood screen and tabernacle were under construction during these years. These repairs will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

In 1586, the person who usually prepared the graves, Jan van Doorne, clearly a handyman, made the bell clappers and shortened a table or altarpiece in the high chancel.<sup>627</sup> A carpenter scuffed the wooden palls designed to go around the high altar, and textile fabric was bought to create a baldachin above the altar. A new lever with a counterweight was also bought for the lamp that hung before the Holy Sacrament.<sup>628</sup> These elements indicate that tabernacle was destroyed during Calvinist rule and that a temporary new home for the consecrated bread for the Eucharist had to be made.

The baldachin is an interesting element as this was not mentioned during the repairs of St James after the first iconoclasm. However, the use of a baldachin was not new. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the church of St Martin in Wezemaal had two baldachins, which were used to shield the ciborium or pyx – with the consecrated bread for the Holy Sacrament – when the receptacle was moved or hung above the altar.<sup>629</sup> Moreover, the baldachin above the altar was also a recurring feature in baroque church architecture. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, for example, the architect Gian Lorenzo Bernini designed a baldachin for the altar of St Peter in Rome.<sup>630</sup> It is not clear if the canopy in St James was a temporary solution compensating for the loss of a tabernacle.

Despite the work done on the altar, further repairs and embellishments were needed as in 1590-1591, the prelate of St Peter's abbey offered a gift of over 8 pounds for the repair of the high altar.<sup>631</sup> How this money was used exactly is not clear, but as discussed earlier his predecessor had invested in the altarpiece of the high altar and the organ of St James after the iconoclasm of 1566. In 1587-1588, larger scale works took place in the chancel. The walls of the high chancel were rebuilt and the gate was reinstalled. The walls and ceiling of the high chancel were then whitewashed. In 1588-1589, the frame (*casse*) of the high altar was constructed.<sup>632</sup> The whitewashing of the chancel was recorded in the accounts of 1589-1590 as well. Strangely, the building/repairing of the walls of the

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<sup>627</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 358, fo 23 ro, 24 ro. “voor de tafele te minderen in den hooghe choir”.

<sup>628</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 358, fo 22 ro.

<sup>629</sup> Minnen, ‘Den Heyligen Sant al in Brabant’. *De Sint-Martinuskerk van Wezemaal En de Cultus van Sint-Job (1000-2000)*, 1:(2) 141.

<sup>630</sup> Firmin De Smidt, *Twee H. Sacramentstorentjes in de Sint-Niklaaskerk Te Gent*, vol. 2, Mededelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie Voor Wetenschappen, Letteren En Schone Kunsten van België - Klasse Der Schone Kunsten, XXXIII (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1971), 4–5; Denis R. McNamara, *Kerken Architectuurgids. Geïllustreerd Overzicht van Stijlperioden, Bouwelementen En Materialen* (Kerkdriel: Librero, 2011), 214–15.

<sup>631</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, 363, fo 20 vo.

<sup>632</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 361, fo 24 vo.



chancel was again recorded in the accounts of 1598-1599.<sup>633</sup> This may have been related to the construction of a new tabernacle on the north side of the choir.

Before the work on the tabernacle, the rood screen underwent several repairs. A gift from the *jonkheer* Jacques Tackoen recorded in the first ordinary accounts of 1583-1585 was destined for the repair of the rood screen.<sup>634</sup> That same accounting year the first repairs took place<sup>635</sup>, but clearly the damage to the rood screen was just as serious as after the first iconoclasm and it needed considerable work. In 1585-1586, Jan Hollandere and Antheunis Maenschyne offered the church 2 pounds each to aid the repairs on the rood screen.<sup>636</sup> More work on the rood screen was recorded in 1589-1590 and again in 1598-1599. This latter account reveals that a new design (*patroon*) had been drawn up, which suggests the rood screen underwent some changes. Furthermore, a horizontal wooden beam was put in place on top of the rood screen, a woodcutter (*beeldensnydere*) was paid to make the cross and the statues of Our Lord, Our Lady and St John, and a carpenter attached the new cross and statues to the rood screen.<sup>637</sup> Thematically the same elements were used as for the old roodscreen.

In the accounts of 1590-1591, we find that the building of a fence or wall ("*afschutsels van den hooghen choir*") around the chancel continued.<sup>638</sup> In 1598-1599, new chancel doors were constructed. A carpenter and a blacksmith were paid 22 and 4 pounds respectively for their work on the doors.<sup>639</sup> Most likely these were part of the rood screen.

In contrast to the repairs to the rood screen after 1566, these repairs seem to have been spread over a period of more than 10 years. This may mean that the rood screen underwent a more radical change. The importance of having a rood screen had not been questioned after the first iconoclasm and neither was it this time. Repairs had begun as soon as possible and parishioners gave spontaneously for its restoration. In St James in Antwerp, a new rood screen was not erected until 1603-1604. We do not know whether the previous one had been destroyed or not during the Calvinist Republic, so we cannot conclude that Ghent was quicker or more devout. St James in Ghent had clearly been struck harder during the second iconoclasm than Antwerp, as the many basic repairs to the roof, walls, etc. illustrate. The rood screen separated the nave from the high altar and choir stalls destined for the clergy. This separation allowed the continuation of divine office in the parish church. As discussed above, this separation was partial as the doors

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<sup>633</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 368, fo 38 vo.

<sup>634</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 357, fo 24 vo.

<sup>635</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 357, fo 29 ro, 32 ro.

<sup>636</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 358, fo 18 vo.

<sup>637</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 368, fo 38 vo-39 vo.

<sup>638</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 363, fo 23 vo, 24 vo.

<sup>639</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 368, fo 38 vo.

in the rood screen were usually left open for worshippers to see the high altar and venerate the host.<sup>640</sup>

The restoration of the chancel continued into the late 1590s. Closed benches, with a small door at the side, were made out of white wooden boards.<sup>641</sup> Their location and descriptions seem to indicate they were choir stalls intended to be used by priests for the divine office or liturgy of the hours.<sup>642</sup> At St James, these daily prayers were sung by the *cotidiane*. Clearly, the stalls did not offer enough seating as the following year (1599-1600) a carpenter was paid to make and deliver seating (“*ghestoelte staende rontomden choir*”) to be installed around or in the chancel.<sup>643</sup> It is unclear whether these seats were fixed in the choir or placed in the chancel-aisle. The new stalls may have been a temporary solution.

The tower had been the focus of numerous repairs in the first phase of the restoration works and the accounts of 1583-1585 recorded work on the church bells.<sup>644</sup> We do not know the details of what had happened, but St James had lost its bells by 1584. They had most likely been removed by the Calvinist rulers to extract the bronze for the manufacture of guns. This had happened to many church bells in the area.<sup>645</sup> As early as 1585-1586, a metalworker, carpenter and leatherworker worked on one or two new church bells and were paid 5 pounds and 18 shillings in total.<sup>646</sup> Metal weighing up to 150 pounds was bought to melt and forge the new bells.<sup>647</sup> The wagon driver (*wageneere*) Mattheus Coelman transported the bell(s) to the church.<sup>648</sup> A hole had to be made in the ceiling of the tower in order to pull the bell up, through its belt, into position. Only one bell, namely the St Andrew bell, is mentioned in the accounts. The other bell was most likely a smaller bell with less significance. The wife of the cordage maker Joos Corbeel sold the church a large belt for the bell and was also paid to make two separate belts out of one belt. Joos Corbeel himself was also asked to make a smaller belt. Bell clappers were

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<sup>640</sup> Muller, *St. Jacob's Antwerp Art and Counter Reformation in Rubens's Parish Church*, 85–86.

<sup>641</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 368, fo 39 ro.

<sup>642</sup> Glover, ‘Keeping Body and Soul Together. Sixteenth-Century Choir Stalls in the Low Countries’, 189. See Glover’s chapter for more information on stylistic changes to choir stalls during the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>643</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 369, fo 45 ro.

<sup>644</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 357, fo 29 ro, 32 ro.

<sup>645</sup> Minnen, ‘*Den Heyligen Sant al in Brabant*’. *De Sint-Martinuskerk van Wezemaal En de Cultus van Sint-Job (1000-2000)*, 1:(2) 306.

<sup>646</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 358, fo 21 ro, 21 vo.

<sup>647</sup> Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, 352 (III).

<sup>648</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 358, fo 22 ro.

also ordered.<sup>649</sup> In 1590, a belt for a small bell was made.<sup>650</sup> Belts for the bell(s) were made and again paid for two years later.<sup>651</sup>

These bells were hugely important in liturgy as well as in daily life. Bells were used for indicating (work) time, mass, divine office, civic events, festivities, danger, fire, executions, etc. The sound of bells was an important element of medieval and early modern Catholic towns, especially in cities such as Antwerp and Ghent. With their large concentration of churches, the bells created a “true architecture of sound” as Muller puts it.<sup>652</sup> The musicality was increasingly appreciated as new inventions (clappers and later carillons) enabled the creation of various melodies and rhythms.<sup>653</sup> The bells also played an important role in funeral culture. This aspect will be discussed thoroughly for St James in chapter 5. The loss of the bells during the period of Calvinist rule changed religious practices in the parish of St James. The practice of bell ringing during funerals as recorded in the churchwarden accounts reveals that, despite the enormous investment in the repairs after 1584, liturgy did not regain pre-1578 standards for several decades.

In 1611 a contract was made with Zuiddorpe, a village in Zeelandic Flanders which still had its church bell but no church. The churchwardens of St James were able to rent this bell, named Saviour, for 7 pounds a year until the parishioners of Zuiddorpe had rebuilt their church. A real breakthrough came in the period 1628-1631, when the bell-founders Frans and Nicolaas de Lespine and Nicolaes Chaboteau were contracted to cast 19 bells for a carillon.<sup>654</sup> There was a similar development at St James in Antwerp, where a carillon with ten small bells was in service by 1626 and by 1655 it had 25 bells.<sup>655</sup>

Like St James in Antwerp, St James in Ghent considered musical accompaniment important. The Ghent organ had been destroyed in the second iconoclasm, and a first replacement appears in the accounts as early as 1583-1585. The guild of the hosiers (*neerynghe van de causmakers*) donated 6 pounds for a small simplified organ without a pedal, called a *posityfe*. That same year, one was bought from the Alexians (mendicants) for 4 pounds, while another 37 shillings (almost 2 pounds) were spent on the transport, the purchase of the table for supporting the organ, the installation of the organ and its

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<sup>649</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 358, fo 23 vo, 24 ro, 24 vo, 25 ro.

<sup>650</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 361, fo 24 vo.

<sup>651</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 363, fo 22 vo-23 vo.

<sup>652</sup> Muller, *St. Jacob's Antwerp Art and Counter Reformation in Rubens's Parish Church*, 79; Minnen, 'Den Heyligen Sant al in Brabant'. *De Sint-Martinuskerk van Wezemaal En de Cultus van Sint-Job (1000-2000)*, 1:(2) 301, 302. For a short history of the use of bells of different kinds in Europe, see Minnen's research.

<sup>653</sup> Minnen, 'Den Heyligen Sant al in Brabant'. *De Sint-Martinuskerk van Wezemaal En de Cultus van Sint-Job (1000-2000)*, 1:(2) 301.

<sup>654</sup> Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, (III) 353-359.

<sup>655</sup> Muller, *St. Jacob's Antwerp Art and Counter Reformation in Rubens's Parish Church*, 79.

pipes.<sup>656</sup> We may wonder about the quality and age of this organ as it needed repairs and tuning in 1586-1587 and 1589-1590.<sup>657</sup> In 1598-1599, a real organ was delivered. Structural changes had to be made to the church interior in order to install it.<sup>658</sup> Master Grispyen Calier, the organ maker, made and delivered the organ for a total of 148 pounds. But this was not all. The carpenters were paid over 9 pounds for their work, probably to make the casing of the organ. Furthermore, a statue of St James was ordered and placed on top of the organ (over 3 pounds) and a seat was made for the organist.<sup>659</sup> The new organ was thus one of the most expensive church interior projects of St James.

During the first years of restoration following the fall of the Calvinist Republic, St James in Antwerp also prioritized the embellishment of services with music. It gathered enough funds to order a new pipe organ as early as 1589. In fact, the churchwardens used the funds that had initially been collected for a new high retable for this purchase, thus illustrating the strong desire of the wardens to have an organ. The organ was built by Guillem van Laer in 1592. However, here too this first organ was not up to the standards parishioners expected, and in 1603 merchants and citizens again contributed to the purchase of a larger and more modern organ.<sup>660</sup> The two phases illustrate how music was considered significant enough to make an immediate purchase of a simple model of organ with the few funds available, and then a few years later when more funds were available to invest in a better quality instrument that mirrored the grandeur of the church.

This love of music and priority given to the restoration of the organ signals the increasing major role musical performances would play in church services in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This was a significant aspect of the Counter-Reformation and this trend towards richer musicality in church services can be traced back to the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. Indeed Stefanie Beghein, who studied the changes in musical culture in several Antwerp churches, found that the cathedral and St James in Antwerp sharply increased their expenditure on music during the last decade of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This trend continued until about 1670.<sup>661</sup>

Another “bare necessity” of St James in Ghent was the tabernacle. Sadly, the surviving churchwarden accounts do not mention the restoration of the tabernacle after 1584. The studies of Firmin De Smidt estimate, however, that the tabernacle standing in the church today was built in the 1590s, which might seem quite late. A contract for the construction

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<sup>656</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 357, fo 24 vo, 32 vo, 33 ro.

<sup>657</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 259, fo 29 vo.

<sup>658</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 368, fo 39 vo.

<sup>659</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 368, fo 41 ro-41 vo.

<sup>660</sup> Muller, *St. Jacob's Antwerp Art and Counter Reformation in Rubens's Parish Church*, 69, 77.

<sup>661</sup> Beghein, ‘Kerkmuziek, Consumptie En Confessionalisering: Het Muziekleven Aan Antwerpse Parochiekerken, c. 1585-1797’, 52. For more details on the music culture, see the doctoral thesis of Stefanie Beghein.

of a tabernacle for St Nicholas, dated 1597, refers for certain details to the tabernacle of St James, which is mentioned as an example to follow. The doors of the tabernacle of St James show the date 1593, thus proving that the new sacrament house was built in 1593 at the latest. These sculpted doors were by the hand of Lieven Plumion, who was also responsible for overseeing the construction of the tabernacle of St Nicholas, according to contracts agreed in 1595 and 1597. It is thus very likely that this Ghent sculptor had also been in charge of the complete construction of the tabernacle in St James.<sup>662</sup> Verstraeten supported Elisabeth Dhanens' theory that the designer may have been Jerome Du Quesnoy the Elder, who also made the tabernacle in Aalst. There is, however, little evidence to support this thesis. Dhanens confirms 1593 as the date of construction.<sup>663</sup> Another argument for this date is found in the last will of the parishioner Jan Van Campene. This letter with instructions for his burial was addressed to the dean of the guild of St Barbara in 1593 and records a gift of 25 guilders to be used for the construction of the tabernacle.<sup>664</sup>



Figure 19 Sacramentshuis St James<sup>665</sup>

<sup>662</sup> De Smidt, *Twee H. Sacramentstorentjes in de Sint-Niklaaskerk Te Gent*, 2:28–34; Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, II, 303–11; Elisabeth Dhanens, *Inventaris van Het Kunstpatrimonium van Oostvlaanderen: Sint-Niklaaskerk Gent*, vol. 3, *Kultureel Jaarboek Voor de Provincie Oostvlaanderen 8* (Ghent: Provinciebestuur Oost-Vlaanderen, 1960), 72.

<sup>663</sup> Elisabeth Dhanens, 'Het Sacramentshuis van de Sint-Jacobskerk Te Gent', *Kultureel Jaarboek Voor de Provincie Oost-Vlaanderen 2* (1951): 89, 93–94; Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, 311 (II).

<sup>664</sup> Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, 519 (II).

<sup>665</sup> Picture from <https://mkgent.be/kerk/sint-jacobskerk/> - consulted on 27/10/2019.

As the churchwarden accounts for the period 1591-1596 are missing, there are no details on the payments made (and income necessary) for the tabernacle.<sup>666</sup> However, the tabernacle itself, still standing in St James today, is also a source. Some additional elements, such as marble steps and panels, were made in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, but as a whole, the tabernacle we see now is the one built in 1593.<sup>667</sup> At first the sculpture was fully freestanding, but later it was connected to the choir screen. The copper plates and doors created by Plumion depict six scenes that relate to the Eucharist, or more precisely portray prefigurations of the Eucharist: the sacrifice of Isaac, Golgotha, the sacrifice of Melchizedek, the Passover meal before the exodus, the copper snake of Moses and the manna in the desert.<sup>668</sup> On top there is a sculpture of a pelican feeding its three young with its blood, which is also a symbol of the Eucharist.<sup>669</sup>

Compared to the restoration after the first iconoclasm, the construction of the new tabernacle after 1584 took more time. The awkward shape of the church is the most likely explanation. It seems logical that an expensive micro-architectural sculpture like the tabernacle could only be installed after the vaults and roof had been fully repaired. Moreover, the works had to be spread out over time for financial reasons. The centrality of the work on the choir from the beginning of the repairs again illustrates the importance of the Eucharist for the churchwardens and parishioners. This is also reflected in the restoration of St James in Antwerp. Here the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, where the sacrament was kept in a wooden sacrament house, was one of the first places to be fully restored after the fall of the Calvinist Republic of Antwerp in 1585. A true comparison with St James in Ghent is not possible because the church in Antwerp suffered a lot less damage and the chapel wardens were wealthy merchants. However, the substantial contributions for repairing the chapel prove the importance of the veneration of the Eucharist for at least some of the Antwerp parishioners and suggest that there was grassroots support for the Counter-Reformation. The chapel wardens did not need to be pressured by the magistracy or bishop to restore their chapel and the veneration of the sacrament. While other guilds and wardens stalled repairs, they immediately took the initiative for their chapel to become an important part of the general Catholic revival of Eucharistic piety.<sup>670</sup> The churchwardens at St James in Ghent may have shown less urgency, but the restoration works they organized were clearly also focused on the continuation of mass and divine office, and honouring the Eucharist.

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<sup>666</sup> The last set of accounts we have from before this period is no. 363, which officially covers the accounting year 1590-1591. However, the transactions recorded make it clear that the information mainly relates to 1591-1592.

<sup>667</sup> Dhanens, 'Het Sacramentshuis van de Sint-Jacobskerk Te Gent', 85, 91.

<sup>668</sup> Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, 305 (II).

<sup>669</sup> Dhanens, 'Het Sacramentshuis van de Sint-Jacobskerk Te Gent', 85.

<sup>670</sup> Muller, *St. Jacob's Antwerp Art and Counter Reformation in Rubens's Parish Church*, 189-98.

Interestingly, local parishes regarded the sacrament house as a central symbol of Catholicism and in the Netherlands it remained the usual place for the reservation of the host for the next 50 years or so. The Council of Trent had confirmed the doctrine of transubstantiation and the importance of reserving a sacred place for the consecrated host, but the exact form and location of the “container” for the Eucharist had not been laid down. A treatise on church decoration by Jacob Müller, *Kirchengeschmuck*, was published in Munich in 1591 and proved to be popular and very influential if not normative. It portrayed both the Roman manner (altar tabernacle) and the German manner (sacrament house) as equally adequate solutions for the reservation of the host. The influence of Rome would gradually change what was considered fashionable for baroque churches in the Netherlands. As a result, altar tabernacles increasingly replaced sacrament houses in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>671</sup>

## 4.5 Conclusion

The importance of (a group of) parishioners in the reconstruction of church buildings and parish life is undeniable, as the previous chapter also shows. The churchwarden accounts of St James are evidence of the continuity that seems almost to have been built into the make-up of the parish. Each year the churchwardens signed the accounts and looked for new ways to generate income. However, some parishes were so badly affected by the Troubles of the late 16<sup>th</sup> century that it was difficult for them to recover. Indeed, in some cases they did not survive.

For a long time, the period before 1600 has mainly been seen as a period of Catholicism in distress due to a lack of organization on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities. For example, the literature shows that the statutes from the provincial council of 1607 only started to circulate in Ghent in 1613. Seen from this point of view, it was only then that the basis was laid for Catholic restoration in the diocese of Ghent.<sup>672</sup> A strong focus on political agency in studies on the Counter-Reformation has confirmed this idea. From 1598 until 1621/1633, the archduke Albert VII and Isabella of Spain were the sovereigns of the Low Countries. The older historiographical view is that the Counter-Reformation or Catholic Reformation was mainly initiated under their rule. This study of the churchwarden accounts has shifted the focus to the parishioners' actions and reveals a different story. It adds to the recent wave of case studies that bring nuance in the history

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<sup>671</sup> Timmermann, *Real Presence: Sacrament Houses and the Body of Christ c. 1270-1600*, 329–37.

<sup>672</sup> Gardin E., *De contrareformatie te Gent, 1584-1633*, p. 188-192.

of Catholicism after the Council of Trent. Early modern Catholicism was a process in which parishioners and local organizations, in the face of various challenges, negotiated with the ecclesiastical structures, hierarchies and traditions.

We have seen how devastated Catholics such as Van Vaernewijck were after the iconoclasm of 1566. The combined efforts of the city council, churchwardens, guilds and other parishioners were necessary for the repair of the most sacred and cherished objects, such as the sacrament houses. However, without motivated churchwardens and financial resources in the parish, the repairs would not have happened. The restoration works on the church building were a crucial factor in the attempts to Catholicism especially after the Calvinist Republic (1577 to 1584). Because of the serious damage, for over a decade practically all the energy of the parish went into the repairs. Immediately after the fall of the Republic, the central government and new city council played a role in stimulating the organization of repairs. Although, their influence deserves close attention, it is clear that their role should not be unduly overestimated. Under the same government, different churches took different paths towards restoration and some churches never fully recovered. After the attacks of iconoclasm in 1566 and again after the period of Calvinist rule, the local parish – as a unity and as an organization – was vital in the process of restoring Catholicism.

This detailed study of the various phases in the repairs at St James after the two outbreaks of iconoclasm brings some nuance to previous comparisons made between these two sets of restoration works. The analysis of the finances illustrates that after the end of the Calvinist Republic the repairs began immediately and huge sums of money were collected, whereas after the first iconoclasm of 1566, people seemed a bit more reluctant to give money for the restoration and to start the repairs. The study of the specific repairs carried out provides more insight into the two processes of restoration and points to continuity. It has become clear that, firstly, the church was in a much worse state in 1584 than it had been after the iconoclasm of 1566, and thus simply more larger scale and more urgent repairs were needed. Secondly, the churchwarden accounts illustrate that after 1584, certain repairs took more time to initiate than similar repairs after the first iconoclasm. An example is the new tabernacle, which was only erected in 1593, nine years after the fall of the Calvinist Republic of Ghent. After the first iconoclasm in 1566, the reconstruction of the sacrament house had taken less than two years because then the church had not suffered structural damage.

The much more serious damage in the second iconoclasm meant that after 1584, the church of St James was under construction for a much longer period and lacked important traditional elements, such as a set of bells, for several decades. As a result, the practice of bell ringing during funerals did not regain its pre-1578 standards for several decades. The large donations that parishioners gave for the reconstruction were thus essential funds for a church in need of many repairs, and not “extras” to restore the church exceptionally fast or for the erection of extravagant, more stylish refurbishment.



Despite the primary practical focus of the repairs, the decision, in both phases, to gradually and tenaciously restore all architectural elements that played a role in Catholic piety and parish pride, such as the rood screen, tabernacle, organ, bells, etc. is telling. The church had not only been under physical attack, but during the period that Protestant ideas had spread and especially during the period of Calvinist rule, its function and use had also been called into question and even prohibited for a while. Protestants had attacked the Catholic beliefs that underlay the use of each of these architectural and sculptural objects. Their reconstructions after 1566 and 1584 countered the Reformation in various ways and reaffirmed Catholicism. Furthermore, some of these elements were necessary for helping to restore the relationship of individuals and the parish as a whole with God. Indeed, the first year after the fall of the Calvinist Republic marked the start of repairs that paid special attention to the chancel and high altar, the centre of Catholic worship and the celebration of mass. Continuity and restoration of the process of negotiation with God was thus the first goal of the repairs. Once the worst damage to the church building had more or less been repaired and the altar installed and consecrated, Holy Mass could be celebrated. Immediately after the basic elements for the celebration of the Eucharist were in place, funds were collected for the construction of a tabernacle and the purchase of bells. Also after 1566, the chancel had received a lot of attention and the continued celebration of Holy Mass was a focal point during the repairs. These elements may seem arbitrary to us, but then they were considered instruments for enabling deeper devotion to God and for strengthening the community. As a result, they were restored twice after the crises of the late 16<sup>th</sup> century. These first and second restoration works thus paved the way for the furthering of sacramental piety in the following decades.



## Chapter 5

# Religious practice: disruption, tradition and renewal between 1562 and 1600

### 5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters, we discussed the religious climate in Ghent, the importance of community and ideas on morality during the Troubles of the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, and the impact of iconoclasm and the Calvinist Republic on the church building of St James. We considered the resilience of the parish and the desire and ability of parishioners in the aftermath of the troubles to repair the damage to their church. The parish church, however, was more than the centre of a community or a building. It was also the focal point of religious practice and belief. This chapter discusses how some traditional religious practices continued unaltered, while others changed during this troubled period. As religious practice and doctrine are closely linked, we also examine the reception and the reaction to the spread of new and traditional Christian ideas.

For insight into the spread of ideas about the Christian faith, we discuss some of the sermons preached in Ghent in 1566 and in the following years. This illustrates some of the topics people were talking and thinking about, and shows how religious concepts were spread and received.<sup>673</sup> For gaining insight into devotional practice, the analysis of the churchwarden accounts is especially useful. We look at two categories of practice that can be traced in the accounts. Firstly, we examine the expenditure and income related to liturgical rituals that needed a well-functioning institution (administration, priests and

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<sup>673</sup> Louise Vermeersch, 'Multimedia in de Stad. Interacties Tussen Het Geschreven, Gedrukte En Gesproken Woord in de Gentse Publiek Sfeer (1550-1585)' (doctoral dissertation, Ghent, Ghent University, 2018). I will discuss some of the sermons but not go into the whole process of communication in its various forms. For more information about the processes of communication and the use of various media, see the dissertation of Louise Vermeersch.

so on) in order to continue. Secondly, the financial transactions linked to religious practices that depended more on the initiative of the parishioners themselves are used as parameters to understand religious practice and agency in the parish.

Through the study of a few parameters, this chapter puts a spotlight on the complex world of Christian thinking and practice in this transitional period, thus adding to the many debates in the historiography of religion in the early modern period. Previously we discussed the views of Michel Cloet and his students, who argue that Catholicism at the end of the 16th century was in need of a counter-reformation led by Catholic officials. This analysis of both the (reception of the) sermons and some of the religious practices confirms the institutional crisis within the Church and the negative assessment of Catholic parishioners by its officials, such as the bishop of Ghent in the late 1560s. However, the analysis of the sermons in 1566 challenges the image of Catholics as being uninformed and uninterested. It reveals that many citizens of Ghent cared deeply about their faith and actively sought more knowledge. This observation paints a very different picture of Flemish Catholics between medieval Christianity and Counter-Reformation Catholicism. Whereas Pollman stressed their lack of militancy in this period, this chapter illustrates their vitality in specific religious aspects. Although the desire to defend the Catholic faith against heresy seemed less important at this stage, this did not render Catholics afraid or uninterested. This transitional period offered important opportunities for learning about religious ideas and many Ghent citizens actively sought them out.

The previous chapter illustrated how the architectural setting in the church enabled the devotional practices. These were usually performed in the form of liturgy which Bogaers defines a proces of communication between church, community and individual. The institution of the church (Roman canon) provided a frame in which communities adapted and performed their liturgy. The local context created a diversity in liturgy in the Catholic world because of these processes of negotiation and communication.<sup>674</sup> Duffy's "The Stripping of the Altars. Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580" brought insight in the colourful role of the laity in Catholic liturgy, but portrayed a rather static picture of Catholicism.<sup>675</sup> Catholic piety was not only social interaction. We previously mentioned Nagelsmit who framed liturgy and Catholic art as a way to negotiate with the divine.<sup>676</sup>

The analysis of religious practice in this chapter shows that despite the disruption caused by iconoclasm, and especially the Calvinist Republic, parishioners remained active in specific areas linked to devotional life and sought ways of showing their allegiance to

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<sup>674</sup> Bogaers, Aards, *Betrokken En Zelfbewust. De Verwevenheid van Cultuur En Religie in Katholiek Utrecht, 1300-1600*, 179; Similar ideas on the role of the ecclesiastical framework are found in: Muller and van Eck, 'Foreword'.

<sup>675</sup> Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580*.

<sup>676</sup> Nagelsmit, 'Venite & Videte: Art and Architecture in Brussels as Agents of Change during the Counter Reformation, c. 1609-1659', 17, 35-47.

their parish church. Tradition and a need for social positioning aided in keeping the parish church central in the lives of many people. This becomes especially clear from the analysis of the funeral culture at St James. The various practices provided a substantial income for the parish church, but they are also interesting in themselves. The reasons why parishioners decided on different types of funeral varied, but the burial practices ensured the continued use of the church and financial aid for its restoration.

The activity and dynamism of the parish would also have been a force to be reckoned with when the time came to implement the Tridentine decrees and a Counter-Reformation Catholicism.<sup>677</sup> St James did not suddenly become an obedient parish after the religious crises. Parishioners had listened to the preachers of their choice in the 1560s and after Calvinist rule ended in 1584 they invested in their parish church and specific traditions on their own terms. However, they showed no interest in some of the new regulations inspired by the Council of Trent. The end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century thus witnessed a complex relationship between the parish of Ghent and the Catholic Church as a whole, which acted as both a brake and an accelerator for specific early modern Catholic practices.

## 5.2 Disruption

### 5.2.1 Hedge preaching: an offensive

The tumultuous upheaval to daily life in Ghent in 1566 was not just the result of iconoclasm. That same year, the Regent Margaret of Parma issued a "Moderation" that opened the door to a period of religious tolerance. Many reformers who had fled abroad in the previous years returned to the Netherlands. Protestant preachers suddenly felt free to preach in public.<sup>678</sup> We do not know how many public sermons there were, but Van Vaernewijck discusses in his chronicle, sometimes briefly and sometimes more extensively, 24 different occasions on which hedge preaching took place in the neighbourhood of Ghent in the period between 3 July 1566 and 22 March 1567. Moreover,

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<sup>677</sup> Though local religion was a force to be reckoned with, Tridentine Catholicism was not in full opposition with what happened in parishes. Whereas Bossy assessed 'modern Catholicism' as eliminating most elements of popular participation, we state that there were overlaps and negotiations. John Bossy, 'The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Europe', *Past & Present*, no. 47 (1970): 51–70.

<sup>678</sup> Phyllis Mack Crew, *Calvinist Preaching and Iconoclasm in the Netherlands, 1544-1569*, Cambridge Studies in Early Modern History (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 6–7.

marriage and baptism ceremonies were performed at some of these events. Although many different preachers were said to have given sermons, which took place in various locations and on different days and times of the week, there was one common denominator in Van Vaernewijck's descriptions. Almost every time he mentions that there were a multitude of listeners, sometimes putting the figure at a few thousand.<sup>679</sup> Although not everyone who attended these sermons were from Ghent, the gatherings had a strong impact on the city.

The people of Ghent and its surroundings may have been attracted by the hedge preaching, but the Protestant preachers were in clear opposition to many Catholic traditions and teachings. In fact, Van Vaernewijck assures his readers that he had not attended the hedge preaching himself and claimed he knew the content of the sermons by listening to those who had attended them. Occasionally, he watched a gathering from a distance.<sup>680</sup>

During a hedge preaching event that took place on 7 July 1566 at Stalendries, near Ghent, the preacher said that Catholics put human institutions above the Bible and thus hid the Word of God. Specific traditions such as praying the Rosary and going on pilgrimage were attacked as being unbiblical. Furthermore, those attending the sermons were urged to put God's Word above the laws of the government and not to fear persecution.<sup>681</sup> The reliance on scripture and the demand for better knowledge of God's Word remained defining issues in the attack on the Catholic Church. The preacher Hermannus challenged Catholic priests and scholars to debate Christian doctrine, but this "invitation" was declined. Defiant preaching seemed to increase after the iconoclasm. Hermannus was fierce in his condemnation of the traditional church, which he called the whore of Babylon. He was convinced the Catholic Roman Church would have to fall in the Netherlands, even if it meant the loss of 100,000 men.<sup>682</sup>

The various preachers all opposed the traditional church and attracted large crowds, but they were not part from an organized Calvinist consistory or sent out by one

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<sup>679</sup> Marc Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, ed. Ferdinand François Ernest Van Der Haeghen, MVB 4 (Ghent: Annoot-Braeckman, 1872), 8-9, 13-14, 28-32, 36, 43, 46, 54-56, 66-67, 80-81, 200, 223, 230, 234-35, 238, 264 (I), 11, 56, 121, 138, 148-149 (II).

<sup>680</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 223 (I).

<sup>681</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 13-14 (I). "... daer mede de papen (zoo zijse hieten) bezich stonden, ende verhieffense boven dwoort Godts ofte verdonckerden dwoort Godts emmer daer mede, zoo dat zijnen rechten loop niet ghehebben en conde ende meest gheboghen zijn ende wijcken om die meinschelicke verzierijnghe ende vonden plaetse te gheven, daert veel behoorlicker ware dat die meinschelicke gheboden weken ende plaetse ghaven den helighen ghebenedijden woorde Godts, dwelck ghelden zal int uuterste oordeel, ende niet die rooscranskins, weghe ende bedevaerden ende vele dierghelijcke supersticien, dat men ooc (naer dwoort van den apostelen) veel meer ghehouden es dwoort Godts gheoorsaem te zijne dan de meinschen oft overheden..."

<sup>682</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 231-232 (I).

organization. In fact, the preachers had various backgrounds and different ideas. Some had already been part of a Calvinist consistory abroad or in Dutch towns, while others were monks who had fled their cloister or even local laymen who had converted to Protestant beliefs only shortly before and had had no training. As a result, their preaching was thus also diverse.<sup>683</sup>

The Reformed preachers not only attacked Catholic doctrine, but also the ecclesiastical structure and the divisions between laypeople and clergy.<sup>684</sup> Moreover, the defiance of the hedge preachers and Protestant gatherings was not limited to words alone. Religious practice was attacked and given a new form. For example, criticism of the traditional Catholic baptism ceremony was sometimes followed by children being given a Protestant baptism. The hedge preachers also conducted marriages,<sup>685</sup> which happened more often in the months following iconoclasm, as well as funerals. On October 5 1566, the Protestant preacher Pieter Dathenus gave a sermon near the churchyard of St James, where a man who had faithfully attended the hedge preaching gatherings was buried in unsanctified ground he had been executed for causing a riot in the church. A Protestant preaching in the city centre was a rare sight and very soon he was stopped and taken to the bailiff.<sup>686</sup>

In this period, the churchyard of St James often became the arena for Protestant-Catholic rivalry. Two days after Dathenus's sermon, another incident took place which attracted large groups of people. It was believed that a Protestant woman, who had lived in Steendam, would be buried that evening. Young men started to sing psalms but soldiers tried to prevent them singing, creating more chaos and attracting more people. When the captains were unable to clear the area and the bystanders had left to get their weapons, the soldiers decided to leave the scene to prevent further escalation. The men and women who had gathered also left shortly afterwards, as no burial took place. The next day, however, a new gathering attracted citizens and soldiers. Women brought along stones they had collected in their bags, so that if soldiers did attack they could help their Protestant men. A few days later, an incident occurred where a group of citizens accompanied some preachers to their dwelling in Steendam. A soldier fired his gun near the churchyard but missed, after which children and young servants threw rocks at him

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<sup>683</sup> Mack Crew, *Calvinist Preaching and Iconoclasm in the Netherlands, 1544-1569*, 2-9v 44-50; Scheerder, 'Het Wonderjaar Te Gent, 1566-1567', 24-27.

<sup>684</sup> Anne Hudson, 'Preaching Civil Liberties in Medieval England', in *Preaching and Political Society*, ed. Franco Morenzoni, vol. 10, SERMO: Studies on Patristic, Medieval, and Reformation Sermons and Preaching (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 188-90.

<sup>685</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 28-31, 223, 230, 234-235 (I), 11, 138 (II).

<sup>686</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 270 (I); Cornelis Van Campene, Philip Van Campene, and Frans De Potter, *Dagboek van Cornelis En Philip van Campene Behelzende Het Verhaal Der Merkwaardigste Gebeurtenissen Voorgevallen Te Gent, Sedert Het Begin Der Godsdienstberoerten Tot Den 15e April 1571* (Ghent: Annoot-Braeckman, 1870), 32.

and chased him away.<sup>687</sup> Van Vaernewijck recounts that tensions were also high in other areas of Ghent, where similar incidents took place.<sup>688</sup>

Especially after the iconoclasm, these events increased fear of violence among the Catholic Church and its clergy. Van Vaernewijck describes how during this period many priests wore ordinary clothes and let their hair and beards grow so as not to be recognized on the streets.<sup>689</sup> Even in the church building, priests and those who attended mass and the sermons were on their guard. The Dominican preacher Jan Vanderhaghen had soldiers to protect him as he went to preach in the various Ghent parish churches. When he preached at St James in late September 1566, Van Vaernewijck believed that the faithful gathered so closely around him so as to shield him from possible assaults. The tense situation in combination with the large number of people caused sudden panic to break out. Women who stood near the choir fled into the sanctuary, fearing that the preacher and others would be killed. A priest who was saying mass at a side altar during the sermon also fled. When things had calmed down and the preacher continued his sermon, there was fresh panic as a parishioner of St James contested what Vanderhaghen was saying. What had started as a discussion with his neighbour ended in chaos, with the women and priests running out of the church in panic. In the end, the man who had started the discussion was arrested.<sup>690</sup>

But it was not just Catholics who feared violence. Right from the beginning, men who attended the hedge preaching carried arms and special guards were appointed to protect the Protestant gatherings. Van Vaernewijck gives various examples of how the preachers and their audience were on their guard at these events and minor events led to major panic.<sup>691</sup> This illustrates how tensions grew during 1566 as the population seemed to become ever more divided by religious-political issues.

However, apart from judicial violence and some confrontations with soldiers, there was little to no physical confrontation between the different groups of Ghent's citizens. In fact, most citizens in Ghent and the Netherlands avoided conflict.<sup>692</sup> This was in strong contrast to other regions, where conflict between Protestants and Catholics led to violence.

One explanation for this situation is the long tradition of religious debates and plays, particularly among rhetoricians, in Ghent and many other large cities in the Low Countries. The themes and anticlericalism of the Protestant preachers were not new, but

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<sup>687</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 283 (I).

<sup>688</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 281-283 (I).

<sup>689</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 273 (I).

<sup>690</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 264-267 (I).

<sup>691</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 200, 223 (I), 56 (II).

<sup>692</sup> Mack Crew, *Calvinist Preaching and Iconoclasm in the Netherlands, 1544-1569*, 32-38; Pollmann, 'Countering the Reformation in France and the Netherlands: Clerical Leadership and Catholic Violence 1560-1585'.



had been presented for years in the plays of the Chambers of Rhetoric. In addition, the large number of different religious orders in Ghent and its international importance would have accustomed people to a certain degree of religious diversity. This may be the reason why despite the tensions, the hedge preaching gatherings were not really considered a danger to the community. Pollmann believes these are some of the reasons that led Catholics to be rather passive in the face of Protestantism in the 1560's. Furthermore, Phyllis Mack Crew has shown that during the Troubles the Protestant preachers were careful about their actions because they were concerned with their moral legitimacy. They wanted the nobility and the king to regard them as legitimate members of society.<sup>693</sup>

It is not clear if it was a result of this relative peace, or instead one of the causes, but the hedge preaching attracted large numbers of people. Estimates ranged from 7,000 to 14,000, with some observers putting the figure at 25,000. Moreover, "respectable" citizens also came to these gatherings. Van Vaernewijck describes how the July meetings were attended by clearly wealthy citizens, city notables and even members of the Council of Flanders, but the people from the lower classes seemed to be in the majority. At Tournai, however, the magistrates reported that the audience of one hedge preaching event had consisted of as many gentlemen, burghers and merchants as peasants.<sup>694</sup> The scale of the movement shocked contemporaries. Van Vaernewijck reasons that their popularity may have been due to preachers who explained doctrine and tried to enlighten their audiences. This was in contrast to many Catholic priests, who merely told the gatherings to lead pious lives.<sup>695</sup>

Iconoclasm further upset the balance of authority. All parties understood that life as they had known it could change. Whether Ghent and other areas in the Netherlands remained Catholic depended on a small shift in power. Not only were many churches destroyed, but Calvinist preachers also took steps to make use of these or other buildings for their own services. The noblemen governing the country were divided as well. While this situation created a great deal of insecurity, it also led to a sense of freedom among the population.<sup>696</sup>

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<sup>693</sup> Mack Crew, *Calvinist Preaching and Iconoclasm in the Netherlands, 1544-1569*, 141-47; Van Bruaene, *Om Beters Wille. Rederijkerskamers En de Stedelijke Cultuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (1400-1650)*, 122-39; Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635*, 29-34.

<sup>694</sup> Mack Crew, *Calvinist Preaching and Iconoclasm in the Netherlands, 1544-1569*, 8.

<sup>695</sup> Mack Crew, 148-50.

<sup>696</sup> Mack Crew, 13.

### 5.2.2 Effects on devotional practice

The spread of the Protestant ideas and the shock of iconoclasm seemed to have an immediate negative effect on Catholic devotional practices. Van Vaernewijck describes with disappointment a holy day (*kercmesse*) in October 1566, and the Corpus Christi procession that took place in Ghent later that year. Few parishioners attended these celebrations in 1566 and 1567. However, other events were well-attended. Both Van Vaernewijck and the chronicler Cornelis van Campene pay considerable attention to the celebrations for St Lieven (Livinius) on 28 and 29 June 1567.<sup>697</sup> The particular history of this Catholic feast added to its importance for the citizens of Ghent. In the late medieval period, the celebrations included a procession where the reliquary of St Lieven was carried to the village of Sint-Lievens-Houtem and back. The procession was a thorn in the side of many rulers of the Low Countries, who feared the celebrations would lead to disorder and rebellion. After several repressive measures were enacted in the 15<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> century, Emperor Charles V abolished the procession and the translation of the reliquary in 1540 as a punishment for the Ghent revolt. However, the feast day and reliquary of St Lieven remained, and so devotional practices and other celebrations continued in Ghent.<sup>698</sup>

During the iconoclasm, the veneration of St Lieven had faced another serious threat. However, the reliquary was one of the few religious valuables in Ghent that had been kept safe. As a consequence, its survival had great symbolic meaning for many Ghent citizens. It was not only a victory for Catholicism, but also for Ghent's civic tradition. So the festivities of 28 June 1567 saw a large public crowd gather and proved a success. Van Vaernewijck describes with amazement the huge amount of market activity during the celebrations. The reliquary of St Lieven was presented to the public in the church of St Bavo on 28 June amid the beautiful sound of bells and several thousand people came to visit it, according to Van Vaernewijck. Van Campene adds that miracles took place during the festivities. Clearly, the Catholic chroniclers were impressed and pleased by what they saw. For Van Vaernewijck, the number of candles and amount of votive wax offered were

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<sup>697</sup> Bauwens, 'Under Construction? The Catholic Community in Ghent after the Beeldenstorm', 92–93.

<sup>698</sup> Trio, 'Volksreligie Als Spiegel van Een Stedelijke Samenleving. De Broederschappen Te Gent in de Late Middeleeuwen (12de-16de Eeuw)', 119–120 (II); J. Gessler, 'De Aloude Bedevaart Naar Sint-Lievens-Houtem', *Oostvlaamsche Zanten* 16, no. 3 (1941): 72; Boone, *Geld En Macht. De Gentse Stadsfinanciën En de Bourgondische Staatsvorming (1384-1453)*, 96–98; Marc Boone, 'De Sint-Lievensbedevaart. Bouwsteen van de Stedelijke Identiteit van Gent (Late Middeleeuwen En Vroege 16de Eeuw)', *Handelingen Der Maatschappij Voor Geschiedenis En Oudheidkunde Te Gent* 61 (2007): 105–22; Paul Trio, 'Handel En Wandel Met Een Heilige. Organisatie van En Deelnemers Aan de Laatmiddeleeuwse Sint-Lievensprocessie Vanuit de Gentse Sint-Baafsabdij Naar Sint-Lievens-Houtem (Tot 1540)', *Handelingen Der Maatschappij Voor Geschiedenis En Oudheidkunde Te Gent* 61 (2007): 97, 104; Arnade, *Realms of Ritual: Burgundian Ceremony and Civic Life in Late Medieval Ghent*, 53–55.

proof of the deep reverence shown to the reliquary. People from outside Ghent also came into the city centre and gave donations to the church. Van Vaernewijck noted that if the religious feast had not been criticised by Protestants, it would have seemed that there had never been any *gheuserie*.<sup>699</sup> Because of its success, the reliquary was exhibited again the following week, on Sunday 7 July.<sup>700</sup>

The descriptions of these celebrations suggest that rather than having a negative effect on the popularity of local traditional Christian festivities, the *Beeldenstorm* had the opposite effect. Even though the rituals had been contested by Protestants and the official civil and ecclesiastical governments, a large group of citizens obviously did not want to lose this aspect of devotion and tradition. As the event was a festival and not only a religious ritual, the reasons for this celebration and its popularity were partly of a secular nature.<sup>701</sup> Civic pride, tradition, a sense of belonging and the promise of fun could bring people to these “Catholic” feast days as well.

Other Catholic devotions were met with less enthusiasm by Ghent citizens after the iconoclasm. Van Vaernewijck was disappointed by the lack of interest of many parishioners in the ordinary Catholic services. They became significantly less popular in the months that followed the *Beeldenstorm*. In the summer of 1567, the Dominican preacher Lieven Van den Bossche declared in his sermon that the priests of the four principal parish churches in Ghent had complained that although a few years earlier every parish had attracted 4,000 to 5,000 parishioners who received the Eucharist at least once a year, since the rise of the hedge sermons only 400 to 500 were attending traditional church services. Thus, these figures suggest that only one in ten of the former church members still took communion in their church.<sup>702</sup> Although these figures would have been exaggerated, especially for St James and the smaller parishes, the general perception was that Ghent's citizens no longer cared about church practice. Earlier that year, Van Vaernewijck himself noted that there had been a sharp fall in attendance at mass and offerings at St James during holy days. When describing the devotional life of this church during Advent 1566, he stated that only one-third of the people who usually come to church were now present on Sundays and holy days.<sup>703</sup> On the Feast of Circumcision

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<sup>699</sup> Although ‘*geuzen*’ usually only refers to adherents of the political rebellion, Van Vaernewijck clearly uses it here in a broader sense, including Protestants and iconoclasts.

<sup>700</sup> Van Campene, *Dagboek van Cornelis En Philip van Campene Behelzende Het Verhaal Der Merkwaardigste Gebeurtenissen Voorgevallen Te Gent, Sedert Het Begin Der Godsdienstberoerten Tot Den 15e April 1571*, 64; Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 282-283 (II).

<sup>701</sup> André Droogers, ‘Feasts: A View From Cultural Anthropology’, in *Christian Feast and Festival. The Dynamics of Western Liturgy and Culture*, ed. P. Post et al. (Louvain: Peeters, 2001), 90-94.

<sup>702</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 50, 331-332 (II).

<sup>703</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 50 (II).

(January 1567), although the organ was playing and the church bailiff had called for offerings, no one came forward. Van Vaernewijck notes that on other holy days too, less than a quarter of the usual group of parishioners came to church.<sup>704</sup> If his estimates are correct, church attendance must have increasingly diminished after the start of the hedge preaching.

During the Holy Week of 1568, Van Vaernewijck finally saw signs of a reversal of the decline in church attendance and a renewed interest of parishioners in their church. A collection was held to fund the sermons preached during Advent, Lent and for the Sacramental Mass (*sacramentsmesse*). The sum collected, 5 pounds and 8 shillings, surprised Van Vaernewijck as the people of Ghent had already been asked to pay for various collections and taxes.<sup>705</sup> Furthermore, on Easter Sunday (18 April) 1568, approximately 500 men and women stood in line for more than an hour to receive Holy Communion at St James. Van Vaernewijck called this a miracle but was simultaneously realistic enough to acknowledge that some people must have come out of fear; to hide the fact that they were *geuzen*.<sup>706</sup> The change in the behaviour of many was only to be expected after the several months of pressure exerted by the Duke of Alva, the Council of Troubles and Alva's army. However, we should not forget the material state of the church immediately following the *Beeldenstorm*. The destruction of the church interior and the devotional accoutrements necessary for the celebration of Holy Mass may have reinforced the diminished importance of church services in the first year after the *Beeldenstorm*. Therefore, restoration of the church building and of church practice went hand in hand. As the previous chapter shows, most of the restoration work on the church of St James was only realized in 1568. So this may also have played a role in reviving people's interest in mass in this period. There is not enough information on the numbers of churchgoers and communicants to draw any firm conclusions. However, the example of Antwerp illustrates that there was a growing interest in Catholic devotion. Over the course of the 1570s, there was a spectacular rise in offerings to several devotional sites.<sup>707</sup>

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<sup>704</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 75 (II).

<sup>705</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 28 (IV).

<sup>706</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 34-35 (IV).

<sup>707</sup> Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635*, 83-85, 102.

## 5.3 Reaction

### 5.3.1 Regulars defend the Catholic doctrine

In addition to the hedge preaching, in 1566 and 1567 many people from Ghent and its surroundings went to hear Catholic preachers who tried to defend the Catholic doctrine against the Protestant criticism.

“Hij [Jan Vanderhaghen] was nochtans zeer neerstich int woort Godts te predicken, ende hadde, dees drij voorleden vier daghen, in Ste Jans keercke, voren ende naer noene, ghepredict, met grooten toeloop van volcke; ende zoo neerstich als hij daer inne was, alzoo neerstich quam ooc tvolck te sermoene; zoo dat hij in tmidden vanden winter oft curte daghen, als hij smorghens ten zeven hueren predictte, som haer in de keercken vonden met dat zij open ghijnghen, ende som daer te voren, van voor den vijven, zittende voor der lieden dueren, om, zoo aest als die keercke open ghijnghen, daer in te ghane ende ghoede plaetse te moghen hebben. Ooc volchde hie volck van buten der stadt, als van Dronghene ende dierghelijcke. Hij preecte ooc veel vierigher dan hij plach, ende was eene van de vail- hem oock niet an ghoede stemme oft gheleertheit. Al haddet alle daghe drij sermoenen te doen gheweest, hij was den man wel ende ten scheen hem niet an thebben. Grootelic wracht de gracie Godts duer hem. Daer wasser ooc die ter veltpredicatie ghijnghen, die hem quamen hooren. Maer wel alzoo neerstich ende veel neerstigher vielen daer anne die predicanten buten der stadt; die en spaerden haer zelven niet, ende hadden met grooter begheerten wel willen alle daghen IJ of IIJ waerf predicken, haddet haer toeghelaten gheweest, ende en hadde, mits den verren ghanck, tvolck niet te zeere zijn weercken verlet. Zij hadden ooc bijna altijts buten in haer predication schoon weder ghehad, drooghe, zoete ende liefvelick; dwelck vele voor een meerckelick teeken van Godt upnamen.”<sup>708</sup>

Both the Catholic and Protestant preaching attracted large crowds and Van Vaernewijck's chronicle is again a fascinating source for these events. Another rich source is the account of the brothers Cornelis and Philips Van Campene, which discusses the various sermons held in Ghent during the Wonder Year and the following years.

Not every Catholic sermon fully opposed Protestant ideas. The analysis of Van Vaernewijck's account on the sermons indicates a relative openness to diverging opinions

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<sup>708</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 12 (II).

in Ghent, as well as the fluidity of some of the ideas and of the preachers who spread them. This is further illustrated by an official report found in the city archives. On 6 December 1566, a sermon by the Carmelite brother Antonius Scepene was received with mixed feelings by the Church and city officials. He had preached at St Michael's church about the sacraments, stating that there were two important sacraments on which five others depended. The secretary Prijsbier had submitted a report about him because every time he preached the church was filled with members of what was called "the new religion". The dean of Ghent (*deken der christenheid*) was consulted on this matter as well. He declared that although he did not find any mistakes in the sermon, it was better not to let Scepene preach during Advent.<sup>709</sup> Clearly, some sermons straddled Catholic and Protestant doctrine and pinpointing the precise problem was not easy, even for the ecclesiastical authorities. The report also illustrates that in the months after iconoclasm, Catholic sermons and churches were also attended by groups that some considered to be Protestant. There were thus different views on where the dividing line between Catholicism and Protestantism lay.

Van Vaernewijck also reveals that many citizens went to both the Catholic sermons and the hedge preaching outside the city centre. On the Nativity of Our Lady in 1566, hedge preachers gave sermons near the convent of the Carthusians, while the popular Dominican brother Jan Vanderhaghen gave a sermon in the church of St Michael in Ghent. Both events attracted crowds of people and Van Vaernewijck's account relates how this caused a strange division among the citizens of Ghent and many people were undecided about where to go to. Preachers on both sides accused the other of deceit and seduction. Who was right?<sup>710</sup> The large audiences for preaching in general reveal that the citizens of Ghent were not at all indifferent to religion. Some would have been intrigued by the controversies, while others were seeking more religious knowledge. Whether or not it was officially Catholic and clerical was less important to them.<sup>711</sup>

Van Vaernewijck gives mixed accounts about the success of the Catholic sermons. In August 1566, an Augustinian preached daily at St James. Van Vaernewijck saw many people, including poor people, coming to hear the sermon.<sup>712</sup> During a sermon at St James on 29 September 1566, Vaernewijck notes that the audience mainly consisted of women "as they were more devout than men".<sup>713</sup> However, his descriptions of numerous other sermons in 1566 indicate that the crowds coming to listen to the sermons consisted of

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<sup>709</sup> SAG, Series 94 bis, no 9, fo 212.

<sup>710</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 230-231 (I).

<sup>711</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 12-13 (II).

<sup>712</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 48 (I).

<sup>713</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 264-266 (I). 'mits dat zij devoter dan de mans schijnen zijnde'.

men as well as women. Often the gatherings were so large that the church doors had to remain open during the sermon to let the people standing outside listen as well.<sup>714</sup>

Some Catholic sermons referred to the Protestant views as heresy and opposed their arguments. Not only did this result in the Catholic sermon becoming less of a monologue, but self-criticism also became an important theme. Van Vaernewijck and Van Campene give the impression that the number of Catholic sermons increased during 1566, but there is no quantitative data to prove this. Cornelis van Campene wrote: “*jeghens welcken predicanten hier in steede es men preekende alle daghe bij een Augustijn, in de prochie van Sente Jacops, ende te Predicheeren bij eenen broeder Jan Vanderhaghe, om den ghelooveghen te versterkene vailden ouden gheloove, ende die vanden nieu gheloove waren, om die af te stellene van heurlieder ongheloovehede ende quade opinien.*”<sup>715</sup>

With the rise in popularity of Protestant ideas and preaching, the content of the Catholic sermons altered, according to Van Vaernewijck. The Catholic preacher Jan Vanderhaghen complained about the state of Catholicism, and even dared say that heresy had been necessary to awaken Christians. Van Vaernewijck notes that times had become more open and liberal, as no one would have dared say such things five or six years earlier.<sup>716</sup> He also explains the success of the Augustinian preacher who preached daily at St James during August 1566 by referring to his “new teachings”.<sup>717</sup> Clearly, Catholic preachers were giving a different kind of sermon and teaching more or new things to believers.

In their sermons, the Catholic priests focused more on Catholic reform and purification than on a straightforward attack on Protestant ideas.<sup>718</sup> It was precisely this attitude among priests in the Low Countries that led to the relatively passive reaction of Catholics towards the rise of Protestantism, according to Judith Pollman.<sup>719</sup>

This mixed attitude is also apparent in the chronicle of Van Vaernewijck, who used his writings to defend Catholicism and counter Protestant ideas. After his summary of the hedge preaching that took place at Stalendries on 7 July, he argues against the *sola scriptura* principle on the grounds that it was necessary to understand what the Holy

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<sup>714</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 12-13 (II).

<sup>715</sup> Van Campene, *Dagboek van Cornelis En Philip van Campene Behelzende Het Verhaal Der Merkwaardigste Gebeurtenissen Voorgevallen Te Gent, Sedert Het Begin Der Godsdienstberoerten Tot Den 15e April 1571*, 5.

<sup>716</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 48-49 (I), 271-272 (II). ‘*daerom waren die ketterien van noode: zij maken ons nu wacker ende ghenouch te doene met hare duvelrije*’.

<sup>717</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 48 (I).

<sup>718</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 271-272 (II).

<sup>719</sup> Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635*, 10, 34, 44.

Spirit wanted to say rather than simply follow the letter of the law. From the very beginning, all heretics had used scripture falsely and even the devil used scripture to tempt Jesus in the desert. Moreover, the heretics were very divided among themselves, so they could not all have the right and uncorrupted Word of God. Nevertheless, Van Vaernewijck seems to have been patient in his willingness to explain the Catholic faith. Although he shows admiration for the fervour with which some Protestant followers were willing to give their lives for God's Word, he concludes that they lacked understanding of the faith. Had they had a clear understanding, they would change their minds.<sup>720</sup>

This rather worried and defensive reaction to the events was shared by fellow citizens. In the months preceding iconoclasm, religious issues had become increasingly contentious, but apart from the organization of large gatherings for preaching, the battle in Ghent mainly took place on a spiritual and theological level. Van Vaernewijck wrote after new hedge preaching events on 25 July in the neighbourhood of Ghent: "*vele ghoede verreziende lieden, gheestelic ende weerlic, leet om hooren was, dat dees nieu predicatie ende onbehoorlicke administratie der sacramenten vande zulcke zoo deerlic mesbruuct was*". They considered it a plague coming from an angry God and "*biddende Godt almachtich dach ende nacht, om tenminsten ontslegghen te zijne van zulcke errueren ende dolijngghen, ontrent die stadt van Ghendt daer zij woonachtich waren, overdijnckende dat dit een groote vreeselicke plaghe ende gramschap Godts was, over tvolck*". In particular, the sudden increase in large gatherings seemed incomprehensible. In the same paragraph, Van Vaernewijck explains how from the other side of the divide, the Protestant preachers and their followers prayed that their message, which they considered to be the pure Word, would spread and affect the hearts of people. They also prayed fervently that God would soften the position of the government towards the Protestant cause. This spiritual warfare expressed in sermons and prayers stirred the emotions of many. In both groups, many believers had a hard time coping with the fear and sorrow caused by this novel situation. Others, Van Vaernewijck continues, were less emotionally involved or were positive that things would change swiftly.<sup>721</sup>

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<sup>720</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 13-14 (I). "...dat zij bereet waren om dwoort Godts ende den name Christi niet alleene haer ghoet maer ooc haer leven over te gheven, dwelc meer quam (eijlacen) uut een eenvaudighe viericheijt dan uut een discrete voorzienicheijt, want hadden zij ghmeerct ende wel verstaen die pointen die daar jeghen zijn, zij zouden wel tot anderen verstanden ghecommen hebben, wan ten es niet al dwoort Godts dat dwoort Godts ghenamt es, maer men moet meer bezien wat die meenighe vanden helighen Gheest Godts geweest es, die onder die letteren van den worde Godts besloten licht."

<sup>721</sup> Van Vaernewijck, 36 (I). "many good insightful souls, both secular and clerical were very worried about the new preaching and the abuse of the rightful administration of the sacraments" and prayed day and night to release them from these errors in Ghent and the Low Countries".



## 5.3.2 Countering the Reformation from above

### 5.3.2.1 New regulations regarding preaching

In addition to the relatively spontaneous defensive reaction of Catholic priests to the hedge preaching, the official Church tried to decide on the right response to these challenges.<sup>722</sup> The ongoing spread of Protestantism and the implementation of the decrees of the Council of Trent would organize and alter the way the Catholic Church dealt with defiant ideas. The Council had treated “preaching” with the utmost urgency and it was one of the first items to be discussed. In particular, the decree of the fifth session touched on the theme of education and preaching.<sup>723</sup> In Ghent, the Tridentine reforms began to be implemented as soon as the first bishop of Ghent, Cornelius Jansenius, arrived – in 1568. In many ways, he proved that he was strongly inspired by the Council of Trent. According to the Council, education was among the essential tasks of a bishop. Preaching was one way to achieve this and thus considered important for parish priests as well.<sup>724</sup> At the very least, priests had to preach on Sundays and solemn feast days. Furthermore, content was important and sermons had to include everything the congregation needed to know in order to be saved. However, the style and message had to be adapted to the public and take into account the intellectual capacities of the listeners.<sup>725</sup>

While Trent had increased the central role of the parish priest and bishop, the scope for regulars to function as a preacher seemed to diminish. If a regular wished to preach in a church that did not belong to his own order, he needed according to chapter II of session V of the Tridentine decrees, a licence from the bishop in addition to the licence from his own superior.<sup>726</sup> The fear of heresy led the Council to give the bishops more authority. A later decree, promulgated in session 24 (chapter 5) of the Council of Trent,

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<sup>722</sup> The following article lays at the base of this section: Bauwens, ‘Restoration and Reform of the Parish after Trent. The Case of St James in Ghent (1561-1630)’, 2017.

<sup>723</sup> Frederick J. McGinness, ‘Preaching Ideals and Practice in Counter-Reformation Rome’, *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 11, no. 2 (Summer 1980): 110–11; Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils. Volume II (Trent- Vatican II)*, 667–70.

<sup>724</sup> Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils. Volume II (Trent- Vatican II)*. Council of Trent, session XXIV, chapter VII; session V, second decree, chapter II. See <http://www.thecounciloftrent.com/ch24.htm> consulted on 28/10/2019.

<sup>725</sup> McGinness, ‘Preaching Ideals and Practice in Counter-Reformation Rome’, 111–12.

<sup>726</sup> Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils. Volume II (Trent- Vatican II)*, 670. Council of Trent, session 5, chapter 2. In chapter II of session V, the decrees of Trent clearly state that “Regulars, of whatsoever order they may be, may not preach even in the churches of their own orders, unless they have been examined and approved of as regards their life, manners, and knowledge, by their own superiors, and with his license; with which license they shall be bound to present themselves personally before the bishops, and beg a blessing from them, before they begin to preach.”

supported the bishop even more clearly: “No one, whether Secular or Regular, shall presume to preach, even in churches of his own order, in opposition to the will of the bishop.” In this same paragraph, the obligation to hear the Word of God in one’s own parish church was repeated.<sup>727</sup>

The decrees of the Council of Trent on the method of preaching were, however, sketchy and gave provincial synods and bishops room to work out the specific details.<sup>728</sup> In some areas in neighbouring countries, this directive caused tension between parish priests and their parishioners and between parish priests and regulars.<sup>729</sup> In contrast, Jansenius was quite supportive of the efforts made by mendicants and Jesuits to preach and educate the people of his diocese. According to the historian Jan Roegiers, he intentionally invited the Jesuit Francis Costerus to Ghent to assist him with the catechism.<sup>730</sup> Other Jesuits from Leuven also came to work for Jansenius in Ghent: Peter Simons of Tielt and his friend Johannes David, who would later enter the Jesuit order and become a renowned author of polemic and pious texts.<sup>731</sup> In the early 1560s, Jesuits were also popular preachers at the papal court in Rome. They brought a fresh and Tridentine breeze to preaching in the early modern period.<sup>732</sup>

### 5.3.2.2 Francis Costerus

In response to the rise of Protestantism, the authorities, both ecclesiastical and civil, felt the need to encourage more Catholic preaching in the churches. From 1558 onwards, the Ghent magistracy even paid an annual sum of money directly to the four Ghent orders for preaching in the city.<sup>733</sup> Indeed, the churchwarden accounts and the chronicles of Van Vaernewijck and Van Campene illustrate that in 1566 and the following years, sermons in the church of St James were given by Franciscans, Dominicans, Augustinians and Carmelites. The arrival of the Jesuit Frances Costerus in Ghent in 1567 and his preaching are not recorded in the accounts, but both Van Campene and Van Vaernewijck testify to his presence in Ghent and give details of his sermons. Although they do not mention

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<sup>727</sup> Council of Trent, session 24, chapter 5. See <http://www.thecounciloftrent.com/ch24.htm> consulted on 28/10/2019.

<sup>728</sup> McGinness, ‘Preaching Ideals and Practice in Counter-Reformation Rome’, 112.

<sup>729</sup> Bauwens, ‘Restoration and Reform of the Parish after Trent. The Case of St James in Ghent (1561-1630)’, 2017.

<sup>730</sup> Michel Cloet, *Het Bisdom Gent (1559-1991). Vier Eeuwen Geschiedenis*. (Ghent: Werkgroep de Geschiedenis van het Bisdom Gent, 1992), 38.

<sup>731</sup> Cloet, 39.

<sup>732</sup> McGinness, ‘Preaching Ideals and Practice in Counter-Reformation Rome’, 114.

<sup>733</sup> Johan Decavele and Johan Vannieuwenhuysse, *Stadsarchief van Gent. Archiefgids Deel I, Oud Archief* (Ghent, 1983), 200.

Frances Costerus by name, their descriptions of this Jesuit make clear they are referring to him.<sup>734</sup>

Van Vaernewijck does not mention that Costerus was the Provincial Superior of the Jesuits, but he notes that he was a very learned theologian from Cologne, “*een peerle in dien tijt, om die ghuesen en die twijffelachtich waren in eenighe pointen, hoedanich zij waren, cleen ende groot, den christenen gheloove anghaende, te vuldoene ende te paeijen tot verwonderens toe ...*”, a man worthy to be heard.<sup>735</sup> Van Vaernewijck was amazed by his knowledge and memory of scripture and Christian teachings in various languages.<sup>736</sup> Van Campene observes that when Costerus preached at the beginning of 1567 he attracted many people, including Protestants (*gheuzen*), even though his teaching was soundly “Christian”.<sup>737</sup> These descriptions seem to confirm the new, Counter-Reformation preaching that many manuals on preaching promoted in this period. Knowledge was important as preachers had to allude to scripture, history and examples drawn from daily life. The main point, however, was to persuade people to believe and live good Catholic lives. Applying the principles of classical oratory had to further this sacred cause.<sup>738</sup>

Although Roegiers claimed that Costerus came to Ghent with Jansenius, the two chroniclers situate him in Ghent before the arrival of Jansenius. At first he was a guest at St Peter's Abbey, where his friend Franciscus Davoult de Helfaut was abbot from 1556 to

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<sup>734</sup> Van Campene, *Dagboek van Cornelis En Philip van Campene Behelzende Het Verhaal Der Merkwaaardigste Gebeurtenissen Voorgevallen Te Gent, Sedert Het Begin Der Godsdienstberoerten Tot Den 15e April 1571*, 90, 107, 126.

<sup>735</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 122, 148 (II), 28-29 (III); Marie Juliette Marinus, ‘Kampioenen van de Contrareformatie (1562-1773)’, in *Antwerpen En de Jezuïeten 1562-2002*, ed. Herman Van Goethem (Antwerpen: UFSIA, 2002), 14; L. Brouwers, *De Jezuïeten Te Gent 1585-1773, 1823-Heden*, n.d., 30; ‘Ghendtsche Geschiedenissen of Chronyke van de Beroerten En Ketterye Binnen ... - Bernardus De Jonghe, Jean-Liévin Roothaese - Google Boeken’, 69-70 (I), accessed 24 October 2013, [http://books.google.be/books?id=oEY8AAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=nl&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.be/books?id=oEY8AAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=nl&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false) accessed 24 October 2013; Frans De Potter, ed., *Chronijcke van Ghendt Door Jan Van Den Vivere En Eenige Andere Aanteekenaars Der XVIe En XVIIe Eeuw* (Ghent: 1885, n.d.), 234–35. “*a pearl in his time, to teach the Protestants and those who doubted certain points related to the Christian faith in an amazing way*”.

<sup>736</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 28-29 (III) : “... zulk een memorie als hij hadde, alle die auctoriteijten der scriftuere citerende, de boucken de capittelen, met hoopen; daer naer de leeringhen der vaderen, griecsche, latijnsche, judeesche, aphricaensche, egipsche ende waer dat Christum bekent was, verhalende haer boucken, capittelen, concilien, noummende zeer machtich ende conigne, ende verclarende alle twijffelachtighe questien ende vraghen den gheloove anghaende, een man die weert was ghehoort te zijne in dien tijt. Hij was sober ende abstract, gheen brasserien zouckende, gheenen loon begheerende dan Godts loon...”.

<sup>737</sup> Van Campene, Van Campene, and De Potter, *Dagboek van Cornelis En Philip van Campene Behelzende Het Verhaal Der Merkwaaardigste Gebeurtenissen Voorgevallen Te Gent, Sedert Het Begin Der Godsdienstberoerten Tot Den 15e April 1571*, 50: “...dewelke hadde grooten loop, zoo wel van Guus als van andere personen, zoodat de kercke gheel vul was, hoe wel dat hij preecte goede kerstelicke leeringhe.”

<sup>738</sup> McGinness, ‘Preaching Ideals and Practice in Counter-Reformation Rome’, 116–18.

1567. Later, Costerus and other Jesuits were housed in the parish of St James by the wealthy Lord of Oomberghe at his own property at the end of Cammerstraat, near the Oude Veemarkt, now known as the Vlasmarkt. The *Droogscheerdershuis* in Kwaadham, a side road of Sint-Jakobsnieuwstraat, had been home to the preacher for a while. After having preached at St Peter's and St Bavo's, the Jesuit rector preached at St James during Advent 1568 and Lent 1569, and other holy days. From 9 June 1569 to Easter 1570, a younger colleague took over these sermons.<sup>739</sup> This younger Jesuit may have been the 28-year-old Robertus Bellarmino, who was ordained as a priest in 1570 in Ghent by Jansenius. 1570 proved a crucial year for the Jesuits in Ghent. This was when its negotiations with the city council to establish a college in Ghent floundered, leading to their departure from the city.<sup>740</sup>

The attention Costerus gave to St James is remarkable and this explains our interest in him in this chapter. During the period 1566-1570, most parish churches welcomed preachers from the traditional mendicant orders such as the Dominicans, Augustinians and Carmelites, and only occasionally a Jesuit during Lent and Advent. Costerus was said to work daily in the service of God by the saying mass, hearing confessions and by exhorting men and women to live a devout life.<sup>741</sup> Despite the fact that the Jesuit order could not open a house in Ghent, they managed to gain influence, especially at St James.<sup>742</sup>

Costerus's actions were not just mentioned; we also have details on the content of his sermons. From December 1567 to March 1572, Van Campene wrote down – sometimes at great length – summaries of what various preachers said in Ghent. These include 11 sermons by Costerus, four by the Dominican Vanderhaeghen, another nine sermons by various regulars and parish priests, and finally, the majority, a total of 57 sermons by bishop Jansenius.<sup>743</sup> The influence of Jansenius on religious life is discussed below. These sermons reflect how the official Catholic representatives tried, each in their own way, to direct the faith of the citizens of Ghent. They also illustrate how the Church tried to bring about religious reform in the aftermath of the Troubles.

Costerus was first and foremost a teacher. The content of his preaching indicates he stayed away from heated discussions and dramatic speeches. He wanted to educate

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<sup>739</sup> Van Campene, *Dagboek van Cornelis En Philip van Campene Behelzende Het Verhaal Der Merkwaardigste Gebeurtenissen Voorgevallen Te Gent, Sedert Het Begin Der Godsdienstberoerten Tot Den 15e April 1571*, 147, 199, 205, 211, 225, 247; Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 29 (IV); Brouwers, *De Jezuïeten Te Gent 1585-1773, 1823-Heden*, 30–31.

<sup>740</sup> Brouwers, *De Jezuïeten Te Gent 1585-1773, 1823-Heden*, 31.

<sup>741</sup> Van Campene, *Dagboek van Cornelis En Philip van Campene Behelzende Het Verhaal Der Merkwaardigste Gebeurtenissen Voorgevallen Te Gent, Sedert Het Begin Der Godsdienstberoerten Tot Den 15e April 1571*, 247.

<sup>742</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 122 (II).

<sup>743</sup> Van Campene, *Dagboek van Cornelis En Philip van Campene Behelzende Het Verhaal Der Merkwaardigste Gebeurtenissen Voorgevallen Te Gent, Sedert Het Begin Der Godsdienstberoerten Tot Den 15e April 1571*.

people, not lure them into Catholicism by using emotional arguments. During the sermons of Advent 1567 and Lent 1568, he explained the profession of faith to the parishioners of St James. During Lent 1568, the topics discussed were the meaning of the communion of saints, the Lord's Prayer and the ten commandments.<sup>744</sup> Up until June 1569, Costerus preached regularly at St James, not only during Advent and Lent but also in the period in-between.<sup>745</sup> Apart from the regular preaching on the gospels, he also discussed the Blessed Sacrament.<sup>746</sup> During the Advent of 1568, he gave catechism lessons to children and adults with developmental impairments. He taught them how to form the sign of the cross. He taught other parishioners the Lord's Prayer and Ave Maria in Latin and Dutch. He also explained topics such as the ten commandments, the five precepts of the Church, the virtue of fasting, the feast of Corpus Christi and the meaning of Holy Communion. His Tridentine influence cannot be denied, as during his preaching not only did he discuss religious matters openly disputed by Protestants, but he also referred to the Council of Trent.<sup>747</sup> His undramatic style and focus on education, if Van Campene's descriptions are correct, put him on the side of Catholic reform. Rather than fighting heresy, he wanted to address the problems many believed lay behind the rise of heresy and the doubts of the faithful: a lack of knowledge.<sup>748</sup>

### 5.3.2.3 Sermons at St James

It would be interesting to find out what happened in the realm of preaching after 1570. Did more or fewer Catholic preachers visit St James? The churchwarden accounts recorded some expenses for sermons, but as payments for preachers in the church came from various institutions or funds that were not necessarily recorded in the accounts, we are unable to draw any firm conclusions. Clearly, from 1574 onwards there was a more centralized system for the payment of preaching. Before this date, the accounts do not mention which preachers came during Lent and Advent. For example, there is no record

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<sup>744</sup> Van Campene, 90, 107, 112, 115-116. It is not clearly stated by Van Campene whether this was the Nicene creed or whether it was the adapted Tridentine creed.

<sup>745</sup> Van Campene, 199-200, 202. He announced on 23 December 1568 that he would continue preaching at St James on Tuesdays and Thursdays until Lent.

<sup>746</sup> Van Campene, 147-49.

<sup>747</sup> Van Campene, 211-12, 225-26.

<sup>748</sup> Pollmann, *Catholic Identity and the Revolt of the Netherlands, 1520-1635*, 10, 34, 44; Nagelsmit, 'Venite & Videte: Art and Architecture in Brussels as Agents of Change during the Counter Reformation, c. 1609-1659', 27; Franciscus Costerus, *Dialogue, Oft t'samen-Sprekinge over de Solemnele Processie Des H. Sacraments van Mirakel, Jaerlijcks Te Brussel Ghehouden Ende Naemelijck in Dit Jaer 1610* (Brussels: Velpius, 1611). A change in context will have however affected Costerus as well. In his defense of the veneration of the Holy Sacrament of the Miracle in Brussels, he does not shy away of straightforward accusing anyone who doubts as a heretic.

of a payment to Costerus or to the Augustinian who preached daily at St James in 1566.<sup>749</sup> Van Vaernewijck's account provides some background on how some of these payments worked, but we still know little about the details. It is unclear who took the initiative to welcome the Jesuit to the parish church. Maybe the patron of St James, the abbot of St Peter's Abbey, played a part in this arrangement. Or perhaps Jan Damman, Lord of Oomberghe, who was also an alderman and churchwarden of St James, had a role in attracting the Jesuits to the city.

With regard to payment, Van Vaernewijck wrote that the abbot of St Peter's Abbey had offered Costerus money for his sermons at the abbey but that the Jesuit had refused. Apparently he did the same at St Bavo and St James. He only accepted two of the six *conincxdaelders* presented to him by the pastors and churchwardens of St James, as that was all he needed for his travels to Cologne.<sup>750</sup>

The informal method of payment partly explains why there is no information on Costerus in the churchwarden accounts. Tracing specific payments to preachers is also difficult because some payments were made by other institutions or functionaries, or paid directly from certain collections that were not registered in the churchwarden accounts. From 1560 to 1568, a yearly payment of half a pound, (equivalent to 120 deniers) for "sermons during Advent and Lent" was made by the *sacramentsmeester* Laurens De Grave, who was a baker and warden of the parish institution for poor relief at St James. His successor, the *sacramentsmeester* Joos Callaert, made the same payment to the churchwardens from 1569 to 1575.<sup>751</sup> So even though there are no traces of expenses for preaching during Advent and Lent, the accounts confirm indirectly the practice of payment for sermons. In the accounting year 1574-1575, the institution for poor relief and the cotidiane of St James gave a similar amount of money to the churchwardens for the sermons.<sup>752</sup> Occasional individual donations for sermons were also made. The accounts of 1566-1567 and 1568-1569 (when the bishop arrived in Ghent) record a gift from a parishioner in support of the sermons.<sup>753</sup>

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<sup>749</sup> Van Campene, *Dagboek van Cornelis En Philip van Campene Behelzende Het Verhaal Der Merkwaaardigste Gebeurtenissen Voorgevallen Te Gent, Sedert Het Begin Der Godsdienstberoerten Tot Den 15e April 1571*, 5; Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 48 (I). Van Vaernewijck mentioned this Augustinian preaching daily in August 1566. As this was clearly not during Lent or Advent, the traditional period for more preaching, it was exceptional and most likely a reaction to the hedge preaching.

<sup>750</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 122 (II), 28-29 (IV).

<sup>751</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 347, fo 10 ro; 348, fo 15 ro; 349, fo 17 vo; 351, fo 14 vo.

<sup>752</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 351, fo 15 vo.

<sup>753</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 345, fo 12 ro; 347, fo 10 ro; 351, fo 15 vo.

A passage in Van Vaernewijck's chronicle describes how on 13 April 1568 a collection for the sermons for Advent, Lent and Holy Mass (*sacramentsmis*) was held at St James. This collection resulted in an "amazing" 5 pounds and 8 shillings, wrote Van Vaernewijck.<sup>754</sup> As the churchwarden accounts do not mention a collection for sermons and Holy Mass, the amount collected would have been recorded in another document and managed by another institution. The *sacramentsmeester* redistributed a share of this collection to the churchwardens (half a pound) and the preachers. A sum of around 4 pounds (960 deniers) would definitely have been enough to fund the sermons. After 1575, there is no more mention of gifts from the *sacramentsmeester*, but the churchwarden accounts discuss the payments for sermons in Lent and Advent directly. The churchwardens were put in charge of paying visiting priests and each year they paid between 320 and 400 deniers for the sermons.

Even if we had a more detailed record of all the sermons given at St James, it is important to realize that the parishioners of St James could choose from a large spectrum of preaching. They also had the opportunity to hear sermons in the other churches in their city, as the chronicle of Van Vaernewijck shows. Regulars gave sermons both in their own churches and in the various parish churches in Ghent.<sup>755</sup> So after the hedge preaching ended, people could still listen to a large and diverse range of sermons in Ghent.

### 5.3.2.4 Bishop Cornelius Jansenius

#### 5.3.2.4.1 Sermons

In addition to all these sermons, from 1568 onwards it was also possible to hear the bishop preaching in one of the parish churches. The bulk of the sermons that Van Campene chronicled came from Cornelius Jansenius, who mostly spoke in the cathedral of St Bavo (St John). As the bishop of Ghent, his ideas would have had a profound impact on the city's people. On several occasions, regulars and parish priests copied the messages in his preaching in their own church sermons.<sup>756</sup>

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<sup>754</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 28 (IV).

<sup>755</sup> Van Campene, *Dagboek van Cornelis En Philip van Campene Behelzende Het Verhaal Der Merkwaardigste Gebeurtenissen Voorgevallen Te Gent, Sedert Het Begin Der Godsdienstberoerten Tot Den 15e April 1571*, 149, 165, 166, 172, 180, etc.

<sup>756</sup> Van Campene, 182. On 19 September 1568, for example, Jansenius preached on the subject of the impending plague and poor relief, appealing again to all the parishioners of St Bavo to offer money for the poor. The same request was made by preachers in other parish churches. At St Nicolas, for example, the Dominican Jan Vanderhaghen stressed the importance of giving alms and informed the parishioners about the coming collection.

After Jansenius took up his position as bishop of Ghent in 1568, it was clear that he had been inspired by the Tridentine decrees. He understood his role as a teacher and he preached every Sunday and holy day. After explaining the gospel of the day, he usually discussed a real-life problem or a hot topic of Catholic reform. While Costerus seemed to limit his role to that of a priest and teacher, Jansenius used preaching not only to inform and educate, but also to show his leadership, to admonish, warn, complain, criticize, plea and persuade. Van Campene made quite extensive summaries of the bishop's sermons, which show how his attitude towards the citizens of Ghent evolved.

Jansenius's sermons reveal a clear agenda: he wanted to promote a strict Catholicism as it had been decreed by the Council of Trent. The topics he typically discussed in the following years were strongly related to devotional practices: observing Sundays and holy days<sup>757</sup>, the veneration of saints<sup>758</sup>, the meaning and importance of honouring the Eucharist<sup>759</sup>, confession<sup>760</sup>, the consecration of altars and church buildings<sup>761</sup>, observance of Lent<sup>762</sup>, confirmation<sup>763</sup>, processions<sup>764</sup>, proper baptism and godparents<sup>765</sup>. Everything had to be arranged in a more orderly way and with more reverence towards God. Participants in the Eucharist had to come to church on an empty stomach. Mass would no longer be celebrated in houses using portable altars or in chapels that had not been consecrated. The last rites had to be administered in a timely manner, so that the person was fully conscious when making the confession. Parishioners had to observe holy days and they received precise regulations for Lent.<sup>766</sup>

Jansenius often referred directly to the Council of Trent. His sermons also discussed the promulgation of the decrees and the regulations drawn up by the diocesan synods.<sup>767</sup> The bishop's insistence on prayer was remarkable and he often demanded that the parishioners pray for specific events: the Turks, the divisions in the Christian religion,

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<sup>757</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 260-262 (IV); Van Campene, *Dagboek van Cornelis En Philip van Campene Behelzende Het Verhaal Der Merkwaaardigste Gebeurtenissen Voorgevallen Te Gent, Sedert Het Begin Der Godsdienstberoerten Tot Den 15e April 1571*, 188, 194, 308-11, 364-66, 372.

<sup>758</sup> Van Campene, *Dagboek van Cornelis En Philip van Campene Behelzende Het Verhaal Der Merkwaaardigste Gebeurtenissen Voorgevallen Te Gent, Sedert Het Begin Der Godsdienstberoerten Tot Den 15e April 1571*, 192.

<sup>759</sup> Van Campene, 192-93, 226-27, 244-45.

<sup>760</sup> Van Campene, 201, 244-48, 281-82, 289-91.

<sup>761</sup> Van Campene, 201, 308-11.

<sup>762</sup> Van Campene, 246-48.

<sup>763</sup> Van Campene, 256-57, 307-8.

<sup>764</sup> Van Campene, 289-91.

<sup>765</sup> Van Campene, 305, 327-28.

<sup>766</sup> Van Campene, 308-11.

<sup>767</sup> Van Campene, 289-91, 305, 307-8, 313-15, 316-18.



war<sup>768</sup>, a flood<sup>769</sup>, continual rain that was destroying crops<sup>770</sup>, and the birth of the King's son<sup>771</sup>. In this context, he often organized fast days and processions in the city of Ghent.<sup>772</sup> Both Costerus and Jansenius worked hard to explain the importance of prayer by teaching, for example, the Lord's Prayer.<sup>773</sup> This is understandable, as the bishop had been one of the authors of the Lord's Prayer in the new Roman Catechism. It was his "Tridentine" profile that had secured his appointment as bishop in the first place.<sup>774</sup> More rules inspired by the Council of Trent were added over time. In October 1570, Jansenius stressed that no bibles were to be kept in the homes of parishioners, not even those publications that had been authorized by the Church.<sup>775</sup> In November, Jansenius preached about the new missal (from Rome) that would replace the older one in all the churches of his diocese. This meant that every church would now follow the same liturgy throughout the year.<sup>776</sup>

Jansenius's background as a theologian and exegete was useful in his role as a teacher. He explained the profession of faith in great detail, article by article, the sacrament of confirmation, the Trinity and the ten commandments.<sup>777</sup> Except for confirmation, these matters touched more on doctrine than church practice. When discussing these themes, the bishop did not avoid criticism of what he considered as heresy.<sup>778</sup> His style differed from that of Costerus, in that he did not shy away from openly criticizing the Catholics of Ghent. In fact, his sermons show how his views evolved in this respect, as he seems to have complained more and more about the state of the Catholics as time went on. He believed, for example, that not enough people were following the ordinance to go to confession at least once a year. This was an old regulation, issued by the Fourth Lateran

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<sup>768</sup> Van Campene, 190–91, 323–25.

<sup>769</sup> Van Campene, 289–91.

<sup>770</sup> Van Campene, 342–44.

<sup>771</sup> Van Campene, 376–77.

<sup>772</sup> Van Campene, 342–44, 362–63, 367.

<sup>773</sup> Van Campene, 202, 323–25, 327–28, 332–33.

<sup>774</sup> Gert Gielis, "Providere Ovibus Bonum et Diligentem Pastorem". Hoe Lovanienses de Nieuwe Bisdommen Modelleerden, 1545-1570', forthcoming, 18; Jan Roegiers, *De Oprichting En de Beginjaren van Het Bisschoppelijk Seminarie Te Gent (1569-1623)*, *Verhandelingen Der Maatschappij Voor Geschiedenis En Oudheidkunde Te Gent* 27 (Ghent: Maatschappij voor geschiedenis en oudheidkunde, 1973), 23–26; Michal Bauwens, 'Restoration and Reform of the Parish after Trent. The Case of St James in Ghent (1561-1630)', in *Church, Censorship and Reform in the Early Modern Habsburg Netherlands*, *Bibliothèque de La Revue d'histoire Ecclésiastique* 101 (Leuven: Brepols, forthcoming); Jan Roegiers, 'Cornelius Jansenius (1565-1576)', in *Het Bisdom Gent. Vier Eeuwen Geschiedenis*, ed. Michel Cloet (Ghent: Werkgroep de Geschiedenis van het Bisdom Gent, 1992), 35–36.

<sup>775</sup> Van Campene, *Dagboek van Cornelis En Philip van Campene Behelzende Het Verhaal Der Merkwaardigste Gebeurtenissen Voorgevallen Te Gent, Sedert Het Begin Der Godsdienstberoerten Tot Den 15e April 1571*, 281–82.

<sup>776</sup> Van Campene, 289–91.

<sup>777</sup> Van Campene, 334–37, 342–44, 358–66, 370, 372–73, 376–77, 380–89.

<sup>778</sup> Van Campene, 192–93, 201–2, 332–33, 345, 346, 351–53, 355, 360–61.

Council in 1215, but there were no checks in place and the citizens of Ghent had mostly ignored it. The bishop ordered parish priests to register all people in their parish and check whether they went to confession or not. Over the coming years, he would repeat his warnings about the dangers of neglecting confession. One of the threats facing people who did not confess their sins annually was being refused burial in holy ground. The bishop also decided on punishments, such as fines, for those who refused to obey the Church's ordinances.<sup>779</sup>

Education, admonishment and punishment were not the only tools Jansenius used in his efforts to “re-catholicize” his flock. Reconciliation was also an important aspect of his work. Apart from the “ordinary” confession, he worked hard to bring about a general pardon. Once this had been arranged, he wanted as many people as possible to make use of it. Even those who had attended the hedge preaching events only once were called on to reconcile with the Church. However, Jansenius would become disappointed with the citizens of Ghent in this regard too, convinced that they cared little for the Catholic faith.<sup>780</sup> His perception of the city's lack of interest in the pardon and the parishioners' unwillingness to observe the holy days and follow the regulations on Lent made him despair. Several times he declared in his sermons that that devotion had reached rock-bottom and that the generations before had been much more devout.<sup>781</sup>

#### 5.3.2.4.2 Other means of promoting Tridentine piety

It is hard to say whether or not the citizens of Ghent were devout. Devotional practices can provide clues about their loyalty to the Catholic faith, but it remains a complex issue as Christianity is more than church practice. But before we go into what the churchwarden accounts tell us about how church practice evolved over time, we outline the efforts the bishop made, aside from preaching, to influence church attendance and the behaviour of parishioners.

To begin with, Jansenius brought about a climate of institutional reform. One of his first achievements was the reform of St Peter's Abbey in 1569. He also stressed the importance of education, founding a seminary and then later encouraging schools to be set up in every parish, both for catechism lessons and general schooling. In 1570, Jansenius ordered the publication of the Tridentine decrees in Ghent and presided over a

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<sup>779</sup> Van Campene, 192–93, 201, 307–11, 337, 383; Hudson, ‘Preaching Civil Liberties in Medieval England’, 187.

<sup>780</sup> Van Campene, *Dagboek van Cornelis En Philip van Campene Behelzende Het Verhaal Der Merkwaardigste Gebeurtenissen Voorgevallen Te Gent, Sedert Het Begin Der Godsdienstberoerten Tot Den 15e April 1571*, 256–57, 281–86, 292, 351–53.

<sup>781</sup> Van Campene, 308–11, 313–15, 370, 372, 373.

diocesan council the following year to further their implementation.<sup>782</sup> However, not everything was a straightforward success. Finding funds for the seminary was a complicated process. The founding of a seminary and parish schools was discussed by the council of Ghent in 1571 and then again during the second provincial synod of Leuven and the second diocesan synod in 1574.<sup>783</sup> There was also opposition to Jansenius's reform of the schools when he tried to centralize education in Ghent and make religious teaching the most important subject.<sup>784</sup>

From the analysis of his sermons, we know that the strict observance of Sundays and holy days was of great importance to Jansenius. Indeed, one of his first formal actions as bishop of Ghent was to send letters to all the curates of his bishopric to inform them about the tridentine inspired regulation of marriages and the observance of holy days. However, it was precisely this issue that led to a serious conflict with the city council, as it did not agree with the strict prohibition of work during holy days. The council sent many letters over the following months, asking the bishop to make exceptions for certain professions and certain days because the regulation was bad for the city's economy. This issue reveals the uneasy relationship between the secular and the ecclesiastical authorities, which sometimes had clashing interests. Given how difficult it was for the church and the officially Catholic city council to come to an agreement, we can be certain that religious practice in Ghent was not up to the standards of the bishop. Indeed, the sermons of Jansenius had already illustrated his disappointment in the devotion of the Ghent citizens. However, complaints by the ecclesiastical authorities about the lax observance of holy days would continue into the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>785</sup> Clearly, for a long period the majority of the population continued to regard the regulations as being too harsh. In 1607, the church received support for its position from secular authorities when the archdukes Albert and Isabella issued an ordinance on the observance of Sundays and holy days. However, the discussion did not end there. Economic pressure and necessity meant that men carried on disobeying or fighting these regulations right into the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>786</sup>

Another important goal of Jansenius was to increase people's reverence for the Eucharist and the other sacraments. He believed the secular government could help to

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<sup>782</sup> Bauwens, 'Restoration and Reform of the Parish after Trent. The Case of St James in Ghent (1561-1630)', 2017.

<sup>783</sup> Roegiers, *De Oprichting En de Beginjaren van Het Bisschoppelijk Seminarie Te Gent (1569-1623)*, 36-41.

<sup>784</sup> Hilde De Ridder-Symoens, 'Lieven van Pottelsberghe En Het Onderwijs Te Gent in de Zestiende Eeuw', *Handelingen Der Maatschappij Voor Geschiedenis En Oudheidkunde Te Gent* 32 (1978): 124-26.

<sup>785</sup> Bauwens, 'Restoration and Reform of the Parish after Trent. The Case of St James in Ghent (1561-1630)', 2017.

<sup>786</sup> Thijs Lambrecht, 'Les fêtes religieuses et le travail dans les Pays-Bas méridionaux, XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles', in *Les temps du travail: normes, pratiques, évolutions (XIVe-XIXe siècles)*, ed. Corine Maitte and Didier Terrier, Pour une Histoire du Travail (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2014), 44-50.

bring about this change. The parish priest was already registering all parishioners to check whether they went to confession and mass at least once a year. Jansenius asked the magistrates of Ghent in 1569 to aid him as well and pushed for legislation against people moving from one Ghent parish to another without an attestation confirming their (previous) membership of a parish.<sup>787</sup> He also asked the magistracy to prohibit parishioners walking around in churches during services in order to engender greater respect for the celebration of mass.<sup>788</sup> The aldermen supported the bishop on this point and issued a resolution. However, the bishop repeated his request again in February 1570 and this time he added new stipulations on how people should behave to show reverence in the church buildings and outside during processions.<sup>789</sup> This focus on a Tridentine form of reverence and religious practice would return in the policies of his successors in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>790</sup>

These initiatives, repeated requests and disappointed reactions of Jansenius and his successors illustrate how negatively ecclesiastical authorities assessed 16<sup>th</sup>-century Catholicism in Ghent. This top-down analysis helps us to understand the religious climate in which the Catholics of Ghent found themselves after iconoclasm. The institutional changes, strict regulations, control over church practice and the fire-and-brimstone sermons changed the climate in which parishioners gave utterance to their faith. Many believers had shown their religious fervour and interest in doctrine by attending numerous sermons in 1566 or participating in important religious festivals, such as the St Lieven's procession the following year. For the bishop, however, these displays of faith seemed less important and other proof was demanded of those who wished to be considered a good Catholic. Moreover, the threat of Protestantism was never far off during the first decade following iconoclasm; the Calvinist Republic was the proof of this reality. As a result, religious practice and devotions were pulled in different directions and this explains the mixed signals given by parishioners in late 16<sup>th</sup>-century Ghent.

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<sup>787</sup> SAG, Series 94 bis, no 21, fo 78vo (request of 11 February 1569).

<sup>788</sup> SAG, Series 94 bis, no 21, fo 27 vo.

<sup>789</sup> SAG, Series 94 bis, no 21, fo 67-68, 79 vo (request of 9 February 1570). For example, on the processional route only religious ornaments were allowed.

<sup>790</sup> Bauwens, 'Restoration and Reform of the Parish after Trent. The Case of St James in Ghent (1561-1630)', 2017.

## 5.4 The evolution of devotional practices at St James

### 5.4.1 Disruption and continuity: some figures

Despite the serious disruption to some of the religious practices, a study of the churchwarden accounts paints a different picture from the one the bishop believed to be true. The serial sources enable a comparison of the period after the first iconoclasm of 1566 with the decades following the Calvinist Regime. The disruption to devotional parish life caused by the iconoclasm is visible in certain income categories and expenditure of the churchwardens, but they were rarely long-term changes. For example, the expenditure of the churchwardens on cleaning and decorating the church in preparation for feast days fell sharply in 1566 and 1567 (see Figure 20). But in the years after 1568 it increased again and spending levels remained high from 1570 until at least 1590, with the exception of the period of Calvinist rule. This form of expenditure is recorded in the “miscellaneous expenses” category and consisted of various transactions, usually directly linked to a feast day such as the feast of St James or Easter. People were paid to clean (*derade te schuerne*), *croonen*, *meyen* and for hanging cloth to decorate the choir.<sup>791</sup> The payments prove that these celebrations were important to the church and definitely continued at St James once the church was repaired.

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<sup>791</sup> RAG, OKA, 341, fo. 16 ro. Most likely *croonen* is used in the meaning of *bekransen* which means to decorate see: <http://gtb.inl.nl/iWDB/search?actie=article&wdb=MNW&id=24065&lemma=cronen&domein=0&conc=true> accessed on 28/10/2019; *meyen* comes probably from *maeyen* = to mow (grass), probably around the church, <http://gtb.inl.nl/iWDB/search?actie=article&wdb=MNW&id=27415> accessed on 28/10/2019.



Figure 20 Graph expenditure of the churchwardens on cleaning and decorating St James in Flemish deniers groten (1561-1590)

The accounts also reveal the expenditure on singing and music, but the categories under which it appears (*diverse uitgaven* (miscellaneous outgoings) and *pensioenen* (wages)), varied. Moreover, the system of registration changed over time (there was no separate category for *pensioenen* after 1578), so charting an accurate evolution of these expenses is not straightforward.

The expenditure on wax, candles and oil can also be regarded as indicators of devotional rites, as such products were used for and during the celebration of mass. Again, these expenses were mainly recorded under the general category of "miscellaneous expenses". Figure 21 shows how this expenditure evolved over time. It reveals that the churchwardens of St James spent less money on oil, candles and wax during the year of iconoclasm and subsequent years. Only in the accounting year 1574-1575 did the expenditure on these products surpass that of the years before iconoclasm. This high level of expenditure continued into the following year. However, the recovery was short-lived and in 1577-1578, the purchase of wax and candles dropped again to the levels seen in the aftermath of iconoclasm. Furthermore, the rise of the Calvinist Republic in 1577 resulted in low levels of expenditure that continued for at least a decade.

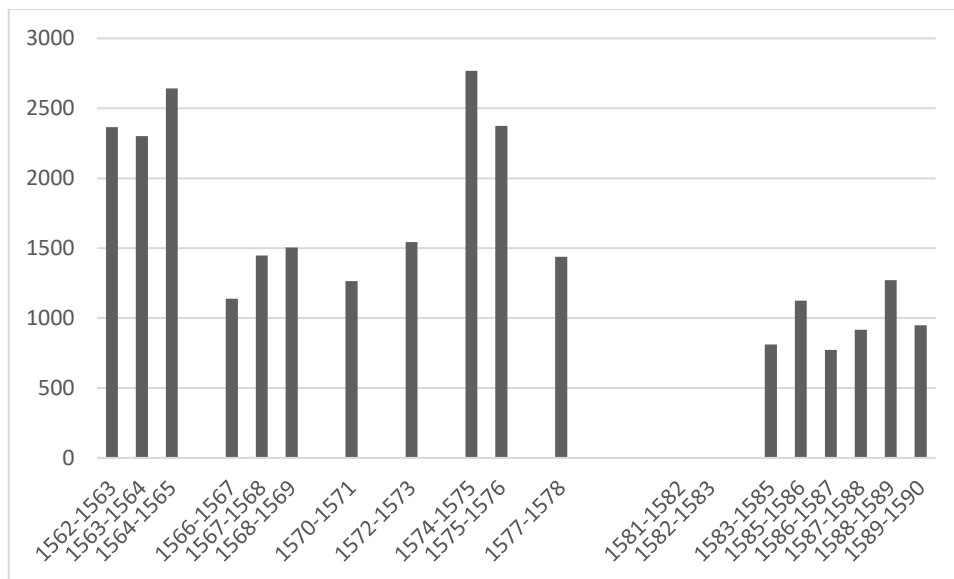


Figure 21 Graph expenditure on wax, candles and oil by the churchwardens of St James in Flemish deniers groten (1561-1590)

This changes in expenditure seem to indicate a decrease in some devotional practices in the aftermath of both iconoclasm and during the Calvinist Republic. However, it is important to realize that the use of these products did not solely depend on the number of devotions held by parishioners or on their requests for devotions. Candles and wax were also used for celebrations involving anniversaries (annual masses celebrated for the dead) and divine offices that had sometimes been founded centuries before. These devotions with a long historical tradition had suffered little from the iconoclasm, but they decline after 1568. The practice of anniversaries suffered in particular under the Calvinist Republic. If we look at the expenditure of the churchwardens on anniversaries and foundations (masses funded by parishioners for the benefit of specific deceased people), this is clearly linked with the purchase of candles and oil, especially in the period after the fall of the Calvinist Republic.

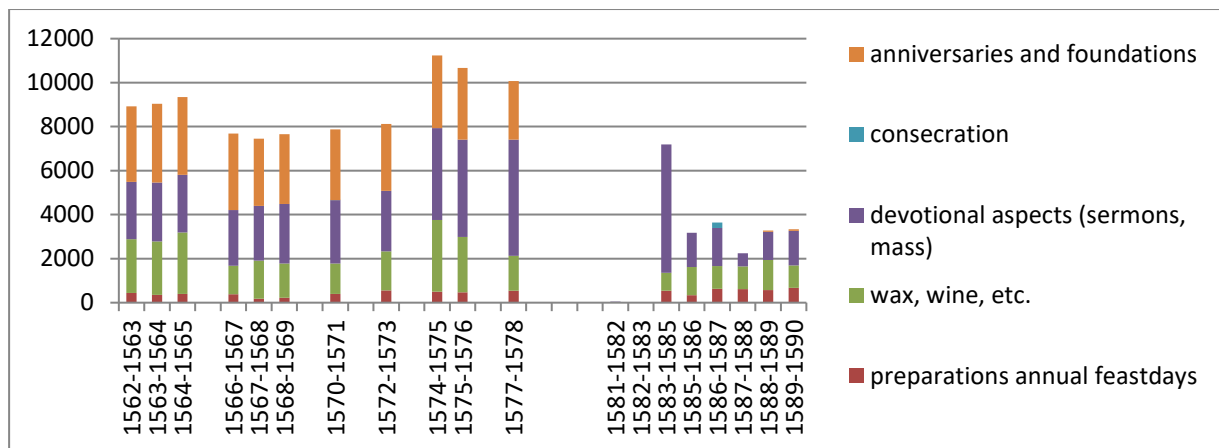


Figure 22 Expenditure of the churchwardens on masses, foundations and other devotional aspects at St James in Flemish deniers groten (1562-1590).

The celebration of anniversaries and funded masses did not significantly decline after iconoclasm, so the drop in expenditure on wax and candles between 1566 and 1573 must be attributed to a decrease in other devotional practices. As discussed previously, for the first two years after iconoclasm less money was spent on the preparations for feast days, such as cleaning and decorating the church. Thus we may conclude that there were indeed fewer celebrations for feast days in this period. In addition, everyday mass celebrations might have decreased as well. The damaged buildings and the shock of iconoclasm are plausible reasons for this decline in Catholic festivities. It is hard to determine what role parishioners played in these developments, as the expenses were paid by churchwardens and do not reflect what parishioners were willing to spend on their parish church.

For the period after the Calvinist Republic, the drop in the churchwardens' expenditure on wax, candles and oil is linked to the end of the celebration of anniversaries. Figure 23 illustrates how spending on anniversaries and foundations at St James changed over a longer time frame: from 1562 to 1630.



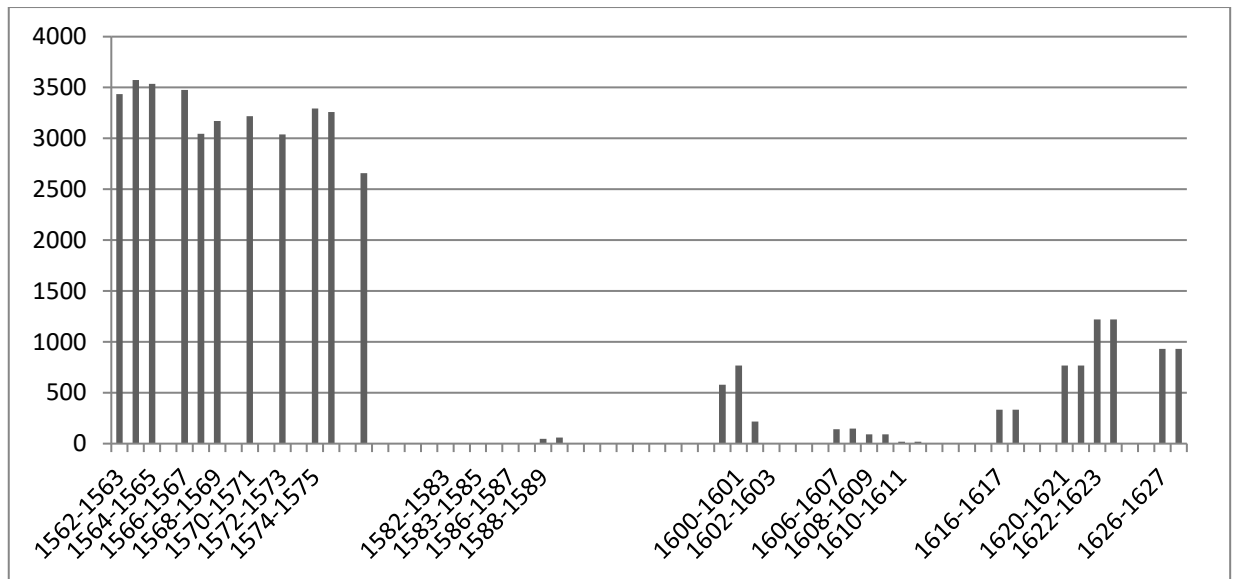


Figure 23 Graph annual expenditure on foundations, anniversaries and divine offices at St James in Flemish deniers groten (1562-1630).

As the figure shows, there were periods when no expenditure on funded masses was recorded at all. It is not until five years after the restoration of Catholicism in Ghent that the accounts show some minimal payments. The annual expenditure on masses and the divine offices remained nominal until at least 1630, never exceeding one-third of the amount they had been in the period before 1578. This long-term decline in the tradition of saying mass for the deceased is directly related to the sharp fall in expenditure on wax and candles. It was the Calvinist Republic, more than iconoclasm, that destroyed important traditions that symbolized the continuity of Catholicism. In order to arrange a foundation, parishioners paid a one-time gift or a yearly rent and the churchwardens made an annual payment to the priests, choir and the poor, as previously agreed in the foundation. These practices could, however, only be supported by a well-oiled church institution that had enough resources and a good administration. And it was precisely these aspects that had collapsed during the Calvinist Republic. Practical obstacles, such as a lack of priests – many had fled during the Troubles – and the loss of income from rents and annuities due to the Dutch Revolt, made continuing these services hard.<sup>792</sup> Inflation may have further worsened the situation. Furthermore, many of these masses were to be celebrated on specific altars, which became impossible after the destruction of the building.<sup>793</sup>

<sup>792</sup> De Brouwer, *Godsdienstig leven en kerkelijke instellingen 1550-1621*. *Land van Aalst*, 146–48.

<sup>793</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*; Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*. RAG, OKA Sint-Jacobs Gent, no 341-388.

Thus the decline in these celebrations may reflect a lack of resources – human (priests), material (altar, chapel, utensils for mass) and financial – rather than the parishioners' religious state of mind. As we will see later, the number of torches and candles bought by the parishioners themselves did not decrease in this period.

Despite the body blow to the church, parishioners had their own ways of participating in religious practices and supporting their parish church. They could show interest in their church directly through gifts, wills, payments for funerals and seating. These payments clearly benefitted the church, but parishioners' motives for giving may not have been purely religious or devotional, as social status may also have played a role. An act of giving could simultaneously be inspired by piety, a desire to further one's status, support the parish (church) and a sense of tradition or duty.<sup>794</sup> Therefore, the involvement of parishioners in the parish cannot be interpreted as a sign of their unequivocal adherence to official Catholic beliefs. The actions of the parishioners, however, do reflect the importance of the parish church as a forum for devotional and social expression, and interaction within the boundaries of Catholic tradition.

This quantitative and comparative approach to Catholic attitudes requires caution. While religious practice was the result of more than just devotion, devotion and its expression through specific practices could change over time. The decline of a specific tradition may in fact have accompanied a spiritual revival. This is what happened, for example, during the religious wars (1560-1600) in many French towns, where fewer masses were founded. Although this may have been because fewer people believed in Purgatory – after this idea was strongly challenged by Protestants – John Bossy and Elisabeth Tingle also argue that the ongoing conflict altered Catholic perspectives and priorities. Activism and new pious forms became more important, and this went hand in hand with a decline in traditional devotions such as prayers for the dead. Although Catholics still strongly supported the doctrine of Purgatory, during the conflict their energy was focused on their own living community. For example, Bossy found that during this period parochial worship centred more on the Eucharist and the visual manifestation of orthodoxy. In their desire to demonstrate confessional identity and good moral behaviour, Catholics adapted traditional devotional practices.<sup>795</sup>

The sudden disruption caused by the Ghent Calvinist Republic may have led to a similar effect in the parish of St James. Indeed, even decades later, when the church building had been restored and enough priests were available, the spending on foundations did not recover to the pre-1578 levels. There was, however, an area of devotional practice which

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<sup>794</sup> Ruben Suykerbuyk, *Reformation, Renovation and Commemoration: The Religious Patronage of a Brabantine Lord*, Simiolus, no. 39 (2017): 44–72. Ruben Suykerbuyk also discusses the various reasons for commemorative culture and patronage.

<sup>795</sup> Elisabeth C. Tingle, *Purgatory and Piety in Brittany 1480-1720*, Catholic Christendom, 1300-1700 (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2012), 115–20; Bossy, 'The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Europe'.

saw the opposite trend: funeral culture. Despite the religious crises, conflicts and destruction, over time the church received increasingly larger sums for the funerals of their parishioners.

## 5.4.2 Funeral culture

### 5.4.2.1 Introduction

Parishioners believed that a decisive element in the journey of their soul, even more so than the individual's participation in the church during his or her life, was the final resting place. Burial in sacred ground was essential and granted for Catholics, but forbidden for heretics. The local disputes concerning burial that arose during the Reformation prove how sensitive this topic was. In Paris, there were several serious incidents, where for example Catholics disinterred the body of someone who had been buried according to reformed rites in the Cemetery of the Innocents. Even in areas that were later officially assigned to the Huguenots, there were attacks during funeral rites and acts of vandalism on the grave.<sup>796</sup> In the parish of St James too, Catholics and Protestants clashed in 1566 over the burial of a Protestant woman in the churchyard, as described earlier.<sup>797</sup>

Tiffany Bousard studied burial practices during the Calvinist Republics in Bruges and Antwerp (1577/1578-1584/1585). This short period of Calvinist Rule had a profound effect on religious life and even burial. For the first time, Protestants could legally bury their dead in existing churchyards, while Catholics were denied access to some churches that were assigned to Calvinists. Sometimes the church and burial area had to be shared by Catholics and Protestants.<sup>798</sup> After 1579, the situation changed to the disadvantage of the Catholics. Anti-Catholic arrangements and further legislation on the use of space helped to alter churches and churchyards according to Protestant standards. For Catholics, these alterations were not just a break in style, but also a form of desacralization of sacred space.<sup>799</sup> The manner in which regulations on funerals were laid down and the specific legislation and divisions between Protestant and Catholic burial spaces were different in

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<sup>796</sup> Vanessa Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500-1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 277.

<sup>797</sup> Van Vaernewijck, *Van Die Beroerlicke Tijden in Die Nederlanden, En Voornamelick in Ghendt, 1566-1568*, 283 (I).

<sup>798</sup> Tiffany Bousard, 'Aan de Rand van Het Graf. De Transformatie van Het Funeraire Leven En Landschap in Antwerpen En Brugge Tijdens de Calvinistische Republieken (1577/1578-1584/1585)', in *Sacrale Ruimte in de Vroegmoderne Nederlanden*, by Liesbeth Geevers and Violet Soen, 2017th ed., *Nieuwe Tijdingen* (Leuven: Universitaire Pers Leuven, 2017), 65-69.

<sup>799</sup> Bousard, 73-74.

Bruges and Antwerp. The political, social and economic background of the towns influenced burial practice in the years of Calvinist rule.<sup>800</sup>

The offering of funeral rites and a final resting place in sacred ground for parishioners had long been an important role of the parish church. The rites varied from deceased to deceased. Wealth, status and gender could influence the funerals. A pall, the cloth used to cover the coffin or body, candles, the ringing of the bells and the renting of a grave and tombstone inside or outside the church were the tangible elements that made up a funeral. All these elements can be traced in the accounts. Of course, funerals could be more elaborate: family members sometimes arranged for music, prayers, the giving of alms and other rituals. However, these elements do not appear in the churchwarden accounts for the simple reason that they were not necessarily organized by the churchwardens.

Nevertheless, the evolution of those financial aspects that are reported in the accounts is very revealing. As Figure 24 shows, the contributions of parishioners in the form of direct donations and payments for funerals was highest during periods of crisis. In particular, the disruption of the Calvinist Republic seems to have inspired parishioners to be more involved in the church's finances.

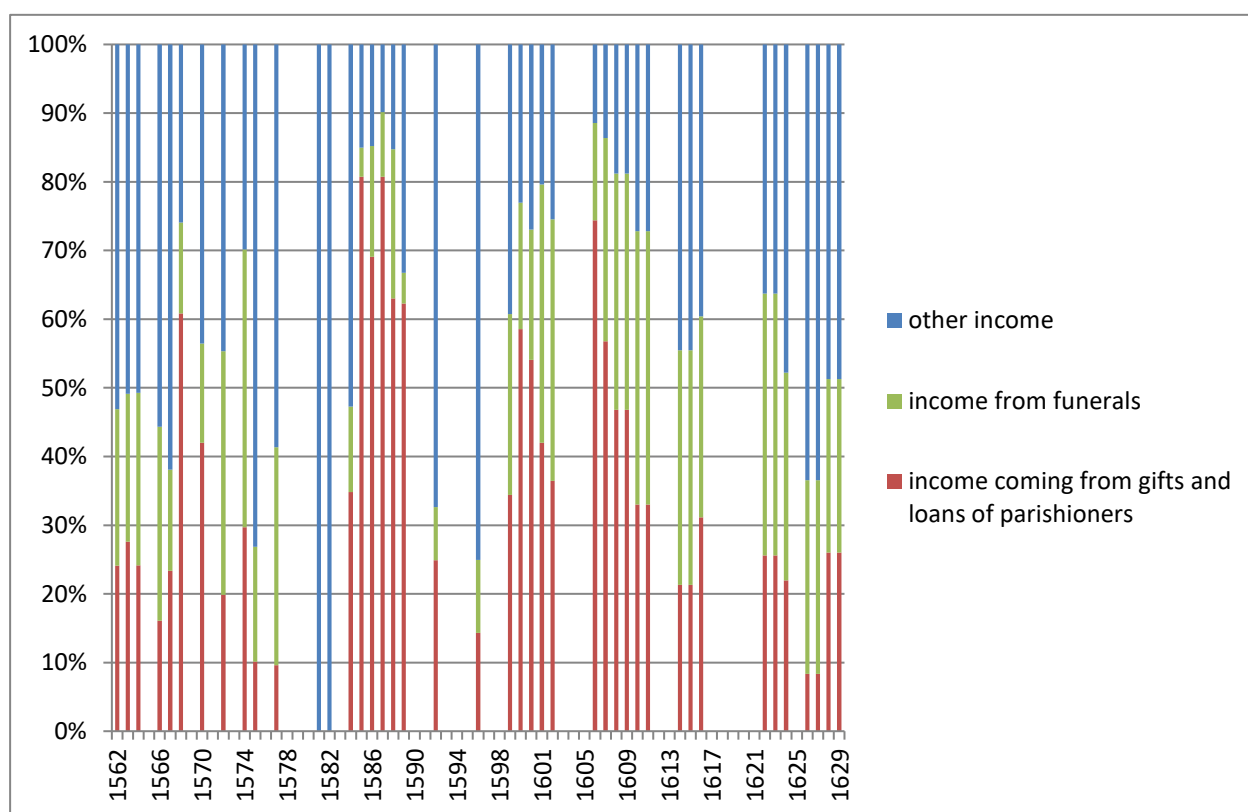


Figure 24 Annual percentage of income gathered directly from parishioners (gifts and funerals) in relation to the total income of the churchwardens of St James (1562-1630)

<sup>800</sup> Bousard, 79–83.

In the period 1584-1610, gifts to churchwardens and money paid for funerals together accounted for more than 80% of the total income of the church. Funerals were one way of ensuring continuity in the parish. The accounts show once again that parishioners' contributions were essential in this period of transition.

In the literature on sculpted funeral monuments in Flanders, 1596 is considered a watershed in funeral culture. From then on, Cynthia Miller Lawrence claims, there was an strong increase in commemorative monuments which became even more pronounced in the following decades. This evolution coincided with the decrees and decisions issued by the government, civil and ecclesiastical, to restore the churches. Lawrence's analysis of this particular elite funeral element, however, also points to an increase, albeit less strong, as early as the decade following 1586. As these funeral monuments played an important role in the restoration of church buildings, their growing popularity was a positive development for the Church as a whole.<sup>801</sup> There are too few funeral monuments in a single parish to perform a robust study, but the trend towards parishioners placing increased importance on or paying more attention to funerals is evident and analysing this development could shed more light on 16<sup>th</sup>-century church culture.

Indeed, the study of funeral practices at St James shows that the trend towards having more "baroque" funerals started as early as the 16th century.<sup>802</sup> This section thus looks at the debate on the start and nature of the Counter-Reformation and the agency of parishioners herein. The rule of the archdukes and the Twelve Years' Truce have always been considered crucial for the Counter-Reformed Church in Flanders. The timing of many general statistics on church repairs and church attendance seem to confirm this.<sup>803</sup> But the case of St James shows a different pattern. In the decades before 1596, specific financial transaction categories linked to religious practices that depended on parishioners' initiatives show an increase almost immediately after the crises. In contrast, those categories directly linked to top-down decisions remained unchanged for a longer period, although changes and revised devotions were implemented top-down later. During this transitional period, some bottom-up processes had already redefined elements within Catholicism. These local processes aided the survival of Catholic life in the parish of St James after the crises.

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<sup>801</sup> Cynthia Miller Lawrence, *Flemish Baroque Commemorative Monuments 1566-1725* (New York/London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1981), 4-5, 10, 17, 24-25.

<sup>802</sup> Germain Bazin, *The Baroque. Principles, Styles, Modes, Themes*. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968), 14, 19, 79. The term "baroque" does not refer to a well-defined artistic style, but rather to the mindset and historical spirit behind the artistic renewal at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>803</sup> An example is de St Martinus church: Minnen, 'Den Heyligen Sant al in Brabant'. *De Sint-Martinuskerk van Wezemaal En de Cultus van Sint-Job (1000-2000)*, 1:(2), 147.

#### 5.4.2.2 The general trend in funerals at St James

The sum of the payments made for torches, a pall, gravestones and the ringing of bells clearly increased, on average, from the end of the 1560s onwards, as Figure 25 shows.

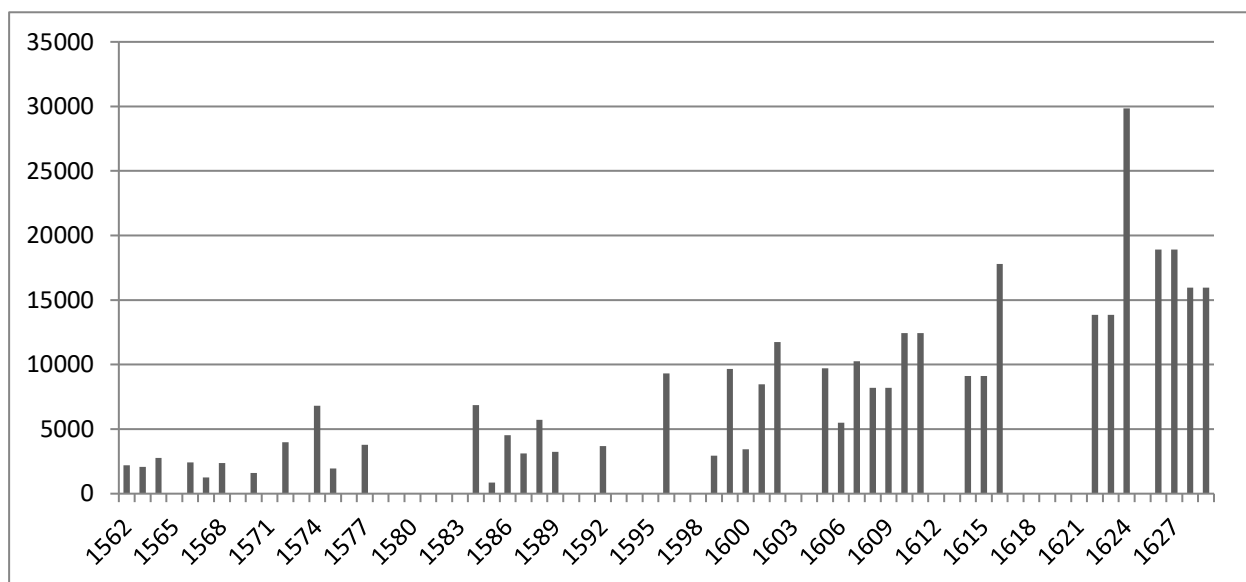


Figure 25 Graph annual income from funerals for the churchwardens of St James in Flemish deniers groten (1562-1630).

From the 1570s onwards, except for the period of the Calvinist Republic, the income from funerals at St James fluctuated but rose steadily, as Figure 25 shows. Population growth, mortality rate, wealth and inflation will have influenced these numbers. We lack detailed information on the mortality rate of the parish in this period, but we do have some information on the general evolution of the population of Ghent. During the period of Calvinist Rule, more people came to live in Ghent. However, the population of Ghent declined sharply in the years after the Calvinist Republic. In that period, about 15,000 people, about a third of the population, left Ghent.<sup>804</sup> After 1590, the population of Ghent grew slowly to finally reach the level of the 1570s in 1630. This increase in population coincided with economic growth.<sup>805</sup> Figure 25 reveals that the parish church's income from funerals rose in the 1570s and remained high in the years following 1584, despite the mass emigration. Thus the income from funerals was not influenced negatively by the drop in population. The income from funerals after 1590 grew faster than the growth in

<sup>804</sup> Johan Dambruyne, *Mensen En Centen. Het 16de-Eeuwse Gent in Demografisch En Economisch Perspectief*, vol. 2001, Verhandeligen Der Maatschappij Voor Geschiedenis En Oudheidkunde Te Gent, XXVI (Ghent: Maatschappij voor geschiedenis en oudheidkunde, 2001), 87–89; J. Briels, *Zuid-Nederlanders in de Republiek 1572-1630. Een Demografische En Cultuurhistorische Studie* (Sint-Niklaas: Danthe, 1985), 27–28.

<sup>805</sup> Dambruyne, *Mensen En Centen. Het 16de-Eeuwse Gent in Demografisch En Economisch Perspectief*, 2001:89.

the population of Ghent. Considering that it took until 1630 for the population to recover to the level of the 1570s, this increase is remarkable.

Apart from the natural mortality linked to population, mortality could also be affected by epidemics such as the plague. This was definitely the case in Ghent, where during the period 1564-1630 the city experienced only 22 plague-free years. These were from 1589 to mid-1596, 1600 and 1601, between 1607 and mid-1616, and from 1620 to 1623. In the period under study, the years 1574-1575 and 1583 took the largest toll and many people died from the plague. Indeed, Figure 25 shows a peak in income from funerals in 1574. Moreover, the peak around 1584 includes funerals from 1583, as this figure is from the 1583-1584 accounts, which cover two years. Catholic services were not allowed during the Calvinist Republic, but it is possible that tombs and candles were paid for after the fall of the Republic in 1584. Figure 25 also shows two remarkable peaks in the income from funerals in 1616 and 1624. Although these years are not generally considered the worst years of the plague in Ghent, they do mark the start of a new epidemic phase. It is also possible that the disease hit the parishioners of St James harder in these years than other parishes.<sup>806</sup>

Thus some of the peaks in Figure 25 can be explained by a higher mortality rate. However, the sums paid for funerals show a general upward trend which cannot be explained by a rise in deaths. This trend, especially from the 1570s onwards, has at least two possible explanations: a general increase in the use of the various funeral elements for which parishioners had to pay, and/or an increase in the expenditure on burials of the most wealthy. This observation brings us right back to debates on the Counter-Reformation.

The tendency towards more and more elaborate funerals fits in with what historians have called “baroque” funerals, but this is usually considered a phenomenon of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Bert Timmermans studied funerals in 17<sup>th</sup>-century Antwerp and shows that one possible explanation behind the clear growth in income from funeral culture during this period is a rise in expensive funerals.<sup>807</sup> Moreover, Stefanie Beghein's study of various parish churches in Antwerp reveals that they recorded a strong increase in burials within the church building during the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. As discussed below, a grave

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<sup>806</sup> Vandeputte, ‘De Pest Te Gent 1568-1640. Bijdrage Tot de Studie van de Pest-Epidemieën in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden.’, 190-91, 227; Isabelle Wauters, ‘Perceptie van Abnormale Mortaliteit Te Gent (1568-1640) Mentaliteitsgeschiedenis Aan de Hand van Verhalende Bronnen’ (Master’s Thesis, Ghent, Ghent University, 2001), 10. Veerle Vandeputte has also shown that patients with plague were taken care of by the Zwarte Zusters (Penitents) in “den Turre” in the parish of St James. It is not clear if patients who died here were buried near St James.

<sup>807</sup> Bert Timmermans, *Patronen van patronage in het zeventiende-eeuwse Antwerpen. Een elite als actor binnen een kunstwereld*. (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Aksant, 2008), 199.

in the church was more expensive than a burial in the churchyard. Beghein found a peak in these funerals in 1669, after which the proportion of burials in the church to burials outside the church dropped again. This shift in place of burial coincided with a rise in more elaborate funerals, where the musical repertoire also underwent a dramatic change. Elaborate funerals were generally welcomed by the church as this enhanced liturgy and the honour paid to the deceased, and increased the church's income. However, the trend was soon criticised. As early as 1629, the canons of the chapter of the Cathedral of Our Lady in Antwerp tried to introduce measures to fight the extravagance of funeral culture.<sup>808</sup> Moreover, in 1685 the Antwerp magistrates and Council of Brabant issued an ordinance to stop some of the excesses of the funeral ceremonial. The regulations and prices set by bishop Malderus in 1621 were reissued repeated and restrictions were placed on bell ringing, the decoration of altars and the number of candles in the funeral procession. In the following years, similar ordinances were issued in other towns in Flanders and Brabant.<sup>809</sup>

#### 5.4.2.3 The various elements of a burial at St James

The particular changes that lay behind the late 16<sup>th</sup>-century trend of elaborate funerals at St James may be revealed by a more detailed study of the churchwarden accounts. Firstly, the evolution in the number of funerals and the use of various funeral elements can help determine what precisely changed. In order to take into account the possibility that inflation made prices soar, the evolution in the prices of the various funeral elements and the number of funeral elements that a parishioner would pay for is also addressed. Secondly, as the various funeral elements used for burial were strongly influenced by the religious ideas on death in this period, these analyses can provide insight into the new perspectives and changing meanings of death and burial in this turbulent period. Finally, this section discusses agency and whether these changes affirmed or countered the official religious stance in Ghent.

According to the churchwarden accounts, a funeral at St James usually consisted of the following aspects: a grave in the graveyard or church, candles, the ringing of bells and a pall. A burial was not just one among the many rites of the church. The dead held an important position in the parish and, unlike today, they were a presence in daily life

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<sup>808</sup> Beghein, 'Kerkmuziek, Consumptie En Confessionalisering: Het Muziekleven Aan Antwerpse Parochiekerken, c. 1585-1797', 154, 161.

<sup>809</sup> Timmermans, *Patronen van patronage in het zeventiende-eeuwse Antwerpen. Een elite als actor binnen een kunstwereld.*, 199; Beghein, 'Kerkmuziek, Consumptie En Confessionalisering: Het Muziekleven Aan Antwerpse Parochiekerken, c. 1585-1797', 162-63.



through rites and material artefacts. The central position of the dead in the parish (in or around the church) illustrates the spiritual union of the living and the dead. There was a distinction made between burial in the churchyard and burial in the church. The locations for burial inside the church were linked to social status. The elite would select a place near the spiritual heart of the building, especially the holiest area – the altar and choir. The high cost of such burials ensured that it was only available to the wealthy stratum of society. Poorer parishioners were buried in the churchyard, as they had no real choice.<sup>810</sup>

This pattern in the place of burial is made clear by the accounts of St James. However, burials in the churchyard are only sporadically mentioned in the churchwarden accounts. Since the majority of the deceased were usually buried in churchyards, as other case studies have shown,<sup>811</sup> this means we lack detailed information on the funerals of the majority of the parishioners of St James. Indeed, it is important to realize that when analysing the burials at St James through the lens of the churchwarden accounts, we are limited to the rites of the elite.

Vanessa Harding showed that “the elite among the dead received many of the attentions paid to the elite among the living. In the short term they were watched and waited on, dressed, wrapped, given protection and shelter, and treated with respect; in the longer term they secured permanent shelter under a roof and inside a noteworthy building. Physical and spiritual protection went together.”<sup>812</sup> Wealthy families wanted to be buried in a sanctified space where they would be associated with the ongoing activity in the church. The canons only permitted burial in a church for distinguished ecclesiastics, lay-founders (of churches, chantries, etc.) and donors, but in practice anyone making the required donation (i.e. paid the fee demanded) would be admitted. These burials impacted the church in many ways. The most powerful parishioners shaped the physical area where they wanted to be buried and directed liturgical performances. Thus the church was not only a place for collective worship, but it was also used to commemorate individuals and their families.<sup>813</sup>

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<sup>810</sup> Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500-1670*, 46, 52. The distinctions between the burial places of wealthy and poor parishioners were not universal. Harding gives the example of the cemetery of the Innocents in Paris and several parishes in London, where the distinctions were not so big.

<sup>811</sup> Harding, 48; Beghein, ‘Kerkmuziek, Consumptie En Confessionalisering: Het Muziekleven Aan Antwerpse Parochiekerken, c. 1585-1797’, 154. We lack detailed information on the proportion of burials in the church and in the churchyard of St James in Ghent for this period. Case studies of parishes in Antwerp indicate that at the beginning of the 17th century, 15% of the deceased parishioners of St James in Antwerp were buried in the church. This percentage grew to about 20-26% in the mid-17th century.

<sup>812</sup> Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500-1670*, 119.

<sup>813</sup> Harding, 119-23; Bernhard Kötting, ‘Die Tradition Der Grabkirche’, in *Memoria. Der Geschichtliche Zeugniswert Des Liturgischen Gedenkens Im Mittelalter*, Münstersche Mittelalter - Schriften 48 (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag,

The desire of parishioners to be overtly present after their death in the house of prayer was more than a matter of social standing and remembrance; it was also based on religious beliefs around Purgatory. The Catholic Church enforced the social diversification in funerals that was already present in Roman Law, which ruled that social and financial status determined how elaborate the funeral celebration could be. Most importantly, the Church believed that the destination of one's soul was only partly determined by a person's actions during their life on earth. The time a soul spent in Purgatory was also strongly influenced by the prayers and actions of the living community. So having a burial place close to the area where prayers and mass were said was ideal. Moreover, the church was a sanctified area where the bones of saints were kept. Some theologians believed that close proximity to a martyr or saint, who could plead on behalf of the deceased, was a benefit. The concept of Purgatory and the belief in the need for prayer for the deceased and the intercession of the saints were all rejected by the Reformation. The Council of Trent, however, reaffirmed this doctrine.<sup>814</sup>

In the late Middle Ages, an aristocratic funeral generally consisted of three elements: firstly, the preparation of the body for lying in state in a domestic setting; secondly, the funeral procession to the burial church and the funeral wake overnight; and thirdly, the solemn requiem mass to which the entire community was invited. For the requiem mass, the churches were decorated with what Minou Schraven calls funeral 'apparati' – a range of temporary decorations in the church. The church's interior would be obscured by dark cloths that carried the deceased's coats of arms or other status symbols and what little light there was came from the burning of candles. From the sixteenth century onwards, iconography linked to death and the macabre would become part of the funeral apparati. Funeral arrangements of other social groups also included elements and traditions from the aristocratic realm. Other rituals linked with this mass were the offrande, the distribution of wax among the household and of alms among the poor. While ordinary citizens usually donated a burial pall and some candles to the church, the elite offered lavish gifts. The church would keep these for their treasury or sell them back to the family.<sup>815</sup> The funerals of the wealthy members of the St James parish in Ghent usually consisted of a simpler combination of these elements.<sup>816</sup>

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1984), 76–78; Jeffrey M. Muller, *St. Jacob's Antwerp Art and Counter Reformation in Rubens's Parish Church*, Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 253 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2016), 491. Kötting describes the various ideas on burial in the church building. Various theologians and church leaders had also opposed the practice before it was accepted for bishops, abbots, good priests and *fideles laici* in the Synod of Mainz (813).

<sup>814</sup> Tingle, *Purgatory and Piety in Brittany 1480–1720*, 1–2, 63–66; Minou Schraven, *Festive Funerals in Early Modern Italy. The Art and Culture of Conspicuous Commemoration*, Visual Culture in Early Modernity (Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 7–8; Kötting, 'Die Tradition Der Grabkirche', 74–78.

<sup>815</sup> Schraven, *Festive Funerals in Early Modern Italy. The Art and Culture of Conspicuous Commemoration*, 9–14.

<sup>816</sup> Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500–1670*, 183–84.

Just like architecture, spatial divisions and liturgical rites, burial practices contributed to the interior arrangement of the church. However, burial practices were also affected by the existing building design. Churches had not been built with the purpose of housing its parishioners' graves, so the areas where burial could take place were limited and people competed for these. In fact, most wills started by stating where the individual wished to be buried. The place of burial and the kind of grave largely determined the price of a funeral. For a grave in the church, prices varied according to the exact location. The area near an altar was most sought after and so more expensive than places further away.<sup>817</sup> It was not always money or gifts that secured a place in the church. Parishioners could also make an agreement with the churchwardens that promised decorations and utensils for a chapel, or to leave an income to found masses, etc. Keeping to such agreements was important. For example, in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century the wealthy donor Willem Moreel and his wife Barbar van Vlaanderenberg were refused burial in the church of St James in Bruges because they had not founded the masses they had promised.<sup>818</sup>

The gravestone itself could simply be a stone slab with an inscription, laid into the floor of the church, but it usually had an engraved text referring to the deceased and ornamentals. Sometimes it was accompanied by memorial tablets hanging on the wall. Shrines and free-standing tombs consumed more space and were more expensive.<sup>819</sup> Graves could be for individuals or families and some contracts allowed reuse of graves by others, as Bogaers' study of Utrecht shows.<sup>820</sup> Sometimes a separate plaque was hung on the wall in order to identify who was buried where. More elaborate texts could refer to the social or religious status of the deceased and their family relations.<sup>821</sup>

The churchwarden accounts mention two kind of graves in the church of St James: the "*vrije sepulture*" (literally "free sepulchre") and the "*onvrije sepulture*". The *vrije sepulture* refers to a place and gravestone in the church for which a perpetual licence had been granted (or bought). The grave could not be removed and often the heirs could use it as well. With this type of grave, a notarial document or charter was often drawn up before the Ghent magistrates in the presence of the churchwardens and parish priest. In practice, many of the graves were not kept in perpetuity and old gravestones were reused

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<sup>817</sup> Harding, 127; Douglas Brine, *Pious Memories. The Wall-Mounted Memorial in the Burgundian Netherlands*, Studies in Netherlandish Art and Cultural History 13 (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2015), 23–24.

<sup>818</sup> Truus van Bueren, *Leven Na de Dood. Gedenken in de Late Middeleeuwen* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 52.

<sup>819</sup> Brine, *Pious Memories. The Wall-Mounted Memorial in the Burgundian Netherlands*, 24–26.

<sup>820</sup> Llewellyn Bogaers, 'Commemoration in a Utrecht Collegiate Church: Burial and Memorial Culture in St. Peter's (1054-1784)', in *Care for the Here and the Hereafter: Memoria, Art and Ritual in the Middle Ages*, ed. Truus van Bueren (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 196–97.

<sup>821</sup> Veronique Despodt, 'Dat Du Best, Was Ic Ende Wat Ic Bem, Dat Sal Tu Werden. Gentse Grafmonumenten En Graftschriften Tot Het Einde van de Calvinistische Republiek' (Master's Thesis, Ghent, Ghent University, 2001), 137–40.

in church furniture or even outdoors for pavements or large building constructions.<sup>822</sup> The *onvrije sepulture* was a grave that was not exclusively for one person or family. Valentin Vermeersch's research in Bruges showed how graves of the 15<sup>th</sup> century were reused for people in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and sometimes the names and commemorative texts were added on the older stone.<sup>823</sup>

In theory, the *vrije sepulture* was linked to the foundation of masses or a large gift, described in the charter. The churchwarden accounts alone are not enough to link a specific large donation to the selection and payment of these graves. In the "*sepulturen*" category we mainly find payments made for graves at the time of the funeral. In the early 1560s, parishioners paid 5 shillings to be buried in their *vrije sepulture* and 10 shillings for a burial in an *onvrije sepulture*.<sup>824</sup> This relatively small price difference can be explained by taking into account a possible earlier large gift or the purchase of a licence for a "*vrijhede van een sepulture*", whereby parishioners gave at least 20 to 30 shillings to the churchwardens.<sup>825</sup> The prices remained at this level for about a decade. From 1572 onwards, the accounts no longer distinguish between the *vrije* and *onvrije* tombs and, apart from the usual 5 and 10 shillings, the sum of 20 shillings for a gravestone became more common. From the late 1570s to the 1620s, the price of a grave in the church ranged from 5 (usually for children) to 10 and 20 shillings.<sup>826</sup> Occasionally, someone paid for a much more expensive grave. The differences and changes in prices are discussed in more detail below.

Another funeral element was the pall or hearse-cloths and hangings. Hangings were less common, but the hearse-cloth was a basic furnishing in funerals in many parishes. Parishes owned cloths which parishioners could rent for a funeral. The pall was often a gift from a wealthy parishioner, who hoped the donation would ensure prayers from the community during future funerals.<sup>827</sup> The churchwarden accounts of St James had no separate category for palls for several years, but in the accounts of 1566-1567 the category "*Sepulturen en Pellen*" was created, indicating that the pall had become a noteworthy aspect of a burial in church. Before 1566, the few indications of the use of a pall are found

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<sup>822</sup> Verstraeten, *De Gentse Sint-Jakobsparochie*, (II) 33, 47, 53, 54, 92, 380; Despodt, 'Dat Du Best, Was Ic Ende Wat Ic Bem, Dat Sal Tu Werden. Gentse Grafmonumenten En Graftschriften Tot Het Einde van de Calvinistische Republiek', 108, 109, 122, 137; Valentin Vermeersch, *Grafmonumenten Te Brugge Voor 1578* (Bruges: Raaklijn, 1976), 78-82.

<sup>823</sup> Vermeersch, *Grafmonumenten Te Brugge Voor 1578*, 80-82.

<sup>824</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 341, fo 7 vo.

<sup>825</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 342, fo 7 vo.

<sup>826</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 348, fo 14 ro; 351; 357, fo 18 ro.

<sup>827</sup> Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500-1670*, 197-202.

under the heading “miscellaneous income” or occasionally under the “sepulturen” category.<sup>828</sup> This does not necessarily mean that the pall was not used more before 1566. It simply shows that it was financially unimportant to the churchwardens. The division of the funeral apparati into different categories changed over time and could simply depend on the clerk responsible for the accounts. In the accounts of 1610-1612, for example, various categories were again combined under the heading “torches, graves, pall and ringing of the bells”.<sup>829</sup>

The literature on other parishes has covered the use of different cloths at different prices. There were usually three different classes of cloth and there must have been a noticeable difference in quality between the best and the worst cloth.<sup>830</sup> Just as in other parishes, St James used palls of various qualities. In the accounts, we find records of “*slechte pelle*” (bad pall), “*nabeste pelle*” (second best pall), “*beste pelle*” (best pall), as well as “*pelleken*” (diminutive of pall), “*tquaet pellekin*” (bad pall), “*tcleen pelleken*” (small pall), “*ouwe pelleken*” (old pall), “*nieuwe pelle*” (new pall), “*lijnwaede*” (linen) and one reference to “*pelle met troode cruuce*” (pall with the red cross). Sometimes no description was given, but the enormous differences in price indicate that there were large differences in quality and allure between the palls. The cheaper palls costed between 6 and 12 deniers, while the *nabeste pelle* was 10 shillings (120 deniers) and the best pall cost 20 shillings (240 deniers) or more.<sup>831</sup>

A funeral was also enhanced by the ringing of church bells.<sup>832</sup> The status of the deceased seems to have largely influenced the kind of bell ringing and the number of bells involved. However, bell ringing was religiously inspired and the sound of bells informed people that a death had occurred and that they could pray for the deceased. The use of specific bells reflected the status of the deceased and the ringing of bells differed from funeral to funeral. The largest bell usually had the deepest tone and it was more expensive to have this bell rung than the smaller bells.<sup>833</sup> There were various bells at St James and they could be rung for different times. The accounts record the use of the ‘*meester clocke*’ (largest bell), ‘*middel clocke*’ (middle bell) or ‘*nameeste clocke*’ (second largest bell), ‘*minste clocke*’ (smallest bell) and the length of time they were rung.<sup>834</sup> In one account, we also find mention of the “*Cathelyne Clocke*”.<sup>835</sup>

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<sup>828</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 342, fo 7 vo; 345, fo 10 ro.

<sup>829</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 379, fo 36 ro.

<sup>830</sup> Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500-1670*, 197-202.

<sup>831</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 345, fo 10 ro; 347, fo 8 ro; 348, fo 12; 349, fo 14; 379, fo 53.

<sup>832</sup> Bogaers, Aards, *Betrokken En Zelfbewust. De Verwevenheid van Cultuur En Religie in Katholiek Utrecht, 1300-1600*, 641; Beghein, ‘Kerkmuziek, Consumptie En Confessionalisering: Het Muziekleven Aan Antwerpse Parochiekerken, c. 1585-1797’, 153, 158.

<sup>833</sup> Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500-1670*, 201-4.

<sup>834</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 344, fo 8 ro; 347, fo 8 vo.

<sup>835</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 351, fo 12 ro.

Not all the accounts specified which kind of bell had been rung, but the price gives an indication of the type of bell. From 1560 to the proclamation of the Calvinist Republic in Ghent in 1577, the churchwardens received 12 to 16 deniers or 1 shilling and 4 deniers for the use of the smallest bell, 2 to 4 shillings (24 to 48 deniers) for the use of the middle bell (which usually rang for 2 to 4 hours), and between 8 and 10 shillings (96 to 120 deniers) for the use of the largest bell (4 to 5 hours of ringing). However, the parishioners paid more than this amount as the bookkeeper indicated in one account that the "church" (churchwardens) received only a third of the due amount. The total prices and calculations were also set out: 12 shillings (144 deniers) for the use of the largest bell plus 3 shillings (36 deniers) per hour of ringing, and 6 shillings (72 deniers) for the middle bell plus 2 shillings (24 deniers) per hour of ringing. A third of this money was for the churchwardens. The accounts give no indication of where the rest of the money went, but most likely the priest, gravedigger, bailiff and bell-ringer received their share directly.<sup>836</sup>

The second wave of iconoclasm during the period of Calvinist Rule in Ghent strongly impacted the tradition of bell ringing over several decades. From 1578 to 1586, there was no bell ringing at all during funerals.<sup>837</sup> From 1587 to 1620, it seems there was only one bell as the accounts make no mention of different bells and the same price was charged for all the funerals: the churchwardens simply received 1 shilling (12 deniers) per hour of ringing.<sup>838</sup>

A final important element that can be traced in the churchwarden accounts is the burning of candles. The candles were used for different occasions: around the hearse during funeral ceremonies, carried during processions and on the altar. They illuminated the church and they were considered a form of prayer for the deceased. The example of London seems to show that there was almost no burial without candles. They were bought by the family of the deceased or given out of charity.<sup>839</sup>

Candles were not just used for funerals alone, which makes the analysis of this category harder. However, the "candles" category sometimes indicates how the candles were used. Our analysis only takes into account those candles that were clearly used for funerals. The candles were of various qualities and sold at different prices. In the 1560s, the prices varied between 7 deniers and 24 deniers per candle. This did not change much over the years. This same range of prices was charged in the following decades, although occasionally more expensive candles (up to 36 deniers in 1586-1587) were sold.<sup>840</sup>

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<sup>836</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 351, fo 12 ro.

<sup>837</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 357, fo 18 ro; 358.

<sup>838</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 359, fo 19 vo; 360, fo 16 ro; 361, fo 18 ro; 362, fo 16 ro, 386, fo 13 vo.

<sup>839</sup> Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500-1670*, 194-95.

<sup>840</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 359, fo 16 vo.

As the average price of the candles sold in church did not change substantially, the change in income from candles over time can be linked to the change in the number of candles being sold. This is illustrated in Figure 26 below.

The different elements of a funeral together created a personalized burial for the deceased parishioner. A highly prestigious location for burial in the church generally went hand in hand with more expensive funeral services and accoutrements. Other research has indicated that even the clerk received a higher payment for his contribution to the funeral if the burial was in a good location. One example is the vestry of Saint-André-des-Arts, which decreed at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century that a burial in the church had to be accompanied by the hiring of a pall and silverware and the ringing of bells. If the deceased or the family chose the larger bells, they also had to hire the better hangings and full range of silverware.<sup>841</sup> The sources do not allow one to draw similar conclusions for St James, but in general a larger payment for one element went with a larger payment for another element.

While individuals shaped the funeral ceremony through their wills or their executors, the funeral was also a collective rite that assembled a large part of the community and confirmed the shared ideals and beliefs of the parish.<sup>842</sup> The deceased believed that after they died their salvation and commemoration depended strongly on others.<sup>843</sup> Thus the strong visual and lavish material culture of the funeral and tomb were the result of this common belief that one should be remembered in order to be prayed for.<sup>844</sup> This spiritual need coincided with the social aspirations of individuals and families to affirm their status.

#### 5.4.2.4 The evolution of funeral practice at St James

Funeral practice changed during the period 1560-1630. The importance of certain elements, such as the candles, pall and the ringing of bells, increased or decreased over time. Figure 26 shows how the number of transactions (separate payments recorded in

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<sup>841</sup> Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500-1670*, 129.

<sup>842</sup> Harding, 234.

<sup>843</sup> Anne-Marie Sankovitch, 'Intercession, Commemoration and Display: The Parish Church as Archive in Late Medieval Paris', in *Demeures d'éternité. Églises et Chapelles Funéraires Aux XVe et XVIe Siècles*, De Architectura (Paris: A. and J. Picard, 2005), 250.

<sup>844</sup> The discussion on this continual need to have more masses and prayers for the dead was advanced by Jacques Chiffolleau's contributions in the 1980s: Jacques Chiffolleau, *La Comptabilité de l'au-Delà. Les Hommes, La Mort et La Religion Dans La Région d'Avignon à La Fin Du Moyen Âge (Vers 1320 - Vers 1480)*, EFR 47 (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1980); Jacques Chiffolleau, 'Sur l'usage Obsessionnel de La Messe Pour Les Morts à La Fin Du Moyen Âge', in *Faire Croire. Modalités de La Diffusion de La Réception Des Messages Religieux Du XIIIe Au XVIe Siècle*, Collection de l'École Française de Rome 51 (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1981), 235-56.

the accounts) for each of the funeral elements per yearly set of accounts changed over time during the period 1561-1589. The figures are interesting as they also indicate the number of funerals we are talking about. For those years where we have information on payments for tombs, the average is 9 to 10 burials in the church per year. The total number of funerals (including burial in the churchyard) would of course have been a lot higher. It is logical to assume a correlation between the number of these burials and mortality in Ghent in general, but the numbers of funerals are too small to draw any firm conclusions. An increase in the number of transactions could be due to higher mortality among the wealthy or a stronger desire among parishioners to be buried with more pomp and Catholic symbols. These issues will become clearer as we analyse and discuss the various apparati.

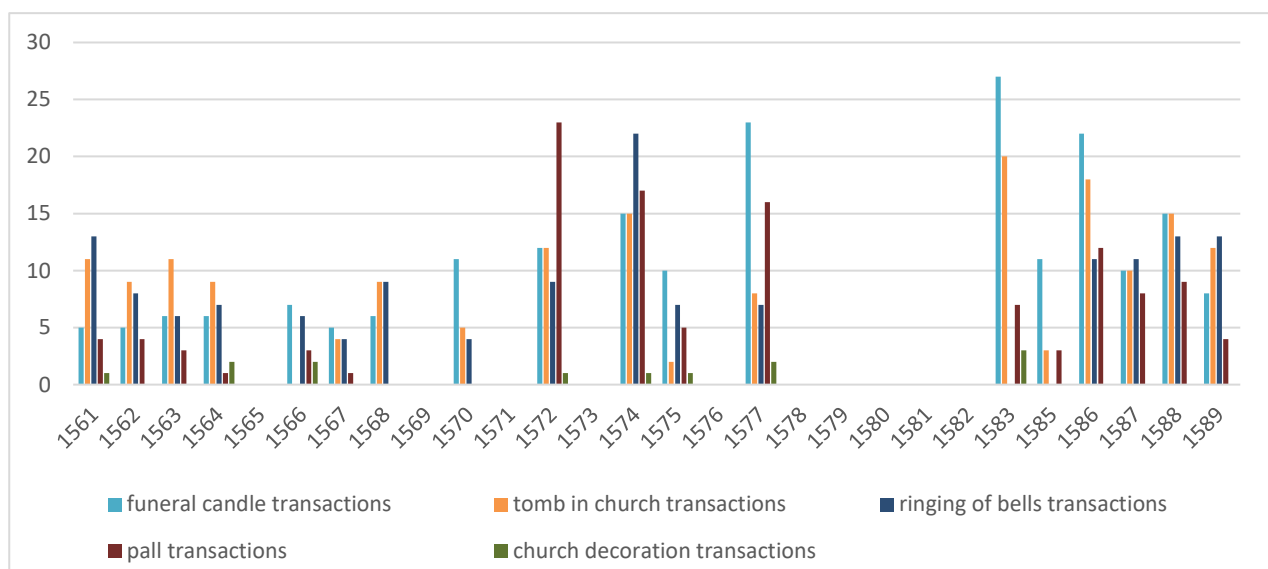


Figure 26 Graph number of transactions of funeral elements per year at St James (1560-1590).

The absolute number of transactions for funerals is less revealing than the variations in the proportion of the various elements. These changes cannot be attributed to population size or mortality rate and are more likely linked to personal choice, tradition, mindset, fashion and changing religious or social ideas.

A funeral element that fluctuated widely was the use of a pall. Whereas only a minority of funerals mentioned a pall in the period before 1572, from 1572 to 1577 the use of a pall, rented or bought from the church, was a very important part of the ceremony. The peak in the income from funerals in 1572 might partly be explained by this rise in the hire and the sale of palls. In the period 1562-1589, 1572 was the only year that witnessed more transactions for palls than any other funeral element. The explanation may lie in the fact that some parishioners used more than one kind of pall and a pall was also used for some burials outside the church. For instance, a funeral could use both the best or middle pall



and the “*pelle te begrave*”, a cheaper pall used for the interment. When Joos de Bleeckere's wife was buried (accounting year 1572-1573), the hire of the pall cost 2 shillings (24 deniers), but there is no mention of a grave in the church.<sup>845</sup>

A pall seems to have become an essential element of a funeral in 1572. The ongoing plague could be one of the reasons for this evolution. The magistrate had (re)issued additional regulations concerning hygiene and gatherings in January 1575, stating that no textiles could be removed from homes that had been visited by the plague. This may have resulted in more palls being bought from the church.<sup>846</sup> Palls retained their importance after the Calvinist Republic, but the accounts for the following decade do not show a higher number of transactions for palls than for candles or tombs in the church. In fact, after the peak in 1572 the number of transactions for palls slowly diminished in both absolute numbers and proportionally compared to the other funeral elements.

Another funeral element that was used in differing quantities over the years was lighting, usually in the form of candles. Its analysis is less straightforward than for palls because candles were bought for purposes other than funerals. We should consider these figures for candle transactions as a minimum as the church sold more candles, but only the transactions that are more or less clearly linked to funerals are included in Figure 26. Still, some observations can be made. Up until 1568, not every record for a burial in church mentioned the purchase of candles. From 1570 onwards, the use of candles becomes more common and for every burial in church there was at least one transaction for candles. In some years, candles were also purchased for burials outside the church. The years 1570, 1575, 1577, 1583 and 1585 witness a high number of transactions for candles in comparison to other funeral elements. From 1587 onwards, the widespread use of candles declines but they remain an important element in most funerals where the deceased is buried in the church.

Over the years, the different funeral elements fluctuated, sometimes becoming more important and at other times falling out of fashion. Parishioners looked at how others of the same or higher social standing were buried and often used similar elements in the funerals of their family members or themselves. However, the changes were not permanent in the long run. By the end of the 1590s, all the elements seemed to attract equal attention. This means that almost every funeral service for a burial in the church building involved bell ringing and the use of palls and candles. However, this would change again a few years later.

Figure 27 illustrates the number of transactions for the various funeral elements over a longer period of time, as it also takes into account information on funerals recorded in

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<sup>845</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 349, fo 14 vo.

<sup>846</sup> Vandeputte, ‘De Pest Te Gent 1568-1640. Bijdrage Tot de Studie van de Pest-Epidemieën in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden.’, 212, 217.

later accounts. It shows that after a period of decline, in around 1600 palls again became an important aspect of funerals and remained an essential element of funeral culture in subsequent years.



Figure 27 Graph number of transactions of funeral elements per year at St James (1560-1620).

One less common funeral element was the decoration of the choir or altars with special cloths. Between 1561 and 1578, a maximum of one or two funerals a year paid for this decoration. In the decade after the end of the Calvinist Republic, only the accounts of 1585 indicate funerals with a decorated choir and altars. This practice returned around 1600 and in the period after 1610 it seems to have become somewhat more widespread. Before then, such decoration had only been used by the elite for the most expensive funerals. This element was thus one of the more prestigious aspects of a funeral as only a minority of those buried in church made use of it for their funerals. It is probably no coincidence that around 1600, when the use of palls had also become more widespread, that the practice of decorating the church with hangings returned. By 1610 more than one-fifth of the total number of funerals made use of this specific decoration, often black hangings. By 1620 about half the funerals involving burial in the church had altars covered in black cloth. As the pall became “normal”, the hangings provided a new way to make one’s funeral more lavish and stand out, and so affirm one’s social and religious class during the funeral.

Another funeral element that suddenly became standard from 1620 onwards was the use of a flag or pennant (“*vane*”) for all those buried in the church (this element is not included in Figure 27). For every funeral in 1620 and the following year, except for the funerals of children, a sum of 24 deniers was paid for the use of this flag. The accounts do not provide any further explanation or description.<sup>847</sup> However, the sudden introduction

<sup>847</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 383, fo 15 ro–22 ro; 384, fo 15 ro–24 ro; 385, fo 13 vo; 387, fo 14 ro.

of the flag might indicate that the churchwardens or other church officials had made it obligatory for those who wanted a burial in the church.

The evolution of these funeral elements, the growing importance of decoration at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century as well as earlier trends concerning the use of palls and candles all point to the importance of elaborate funerals for elite parishioners. As early as the 1570s, funerals started including increasingly more elements. There are indications that lavish funerals were becoming more important. The analysis of the churchwarden accounts not only shows that the number of transactions increased, but it also reveals interesting trends within the existing elements. Figure 28 illustrates how over the years, the duration of bell ringing and the number of candles per funeral rose on average.

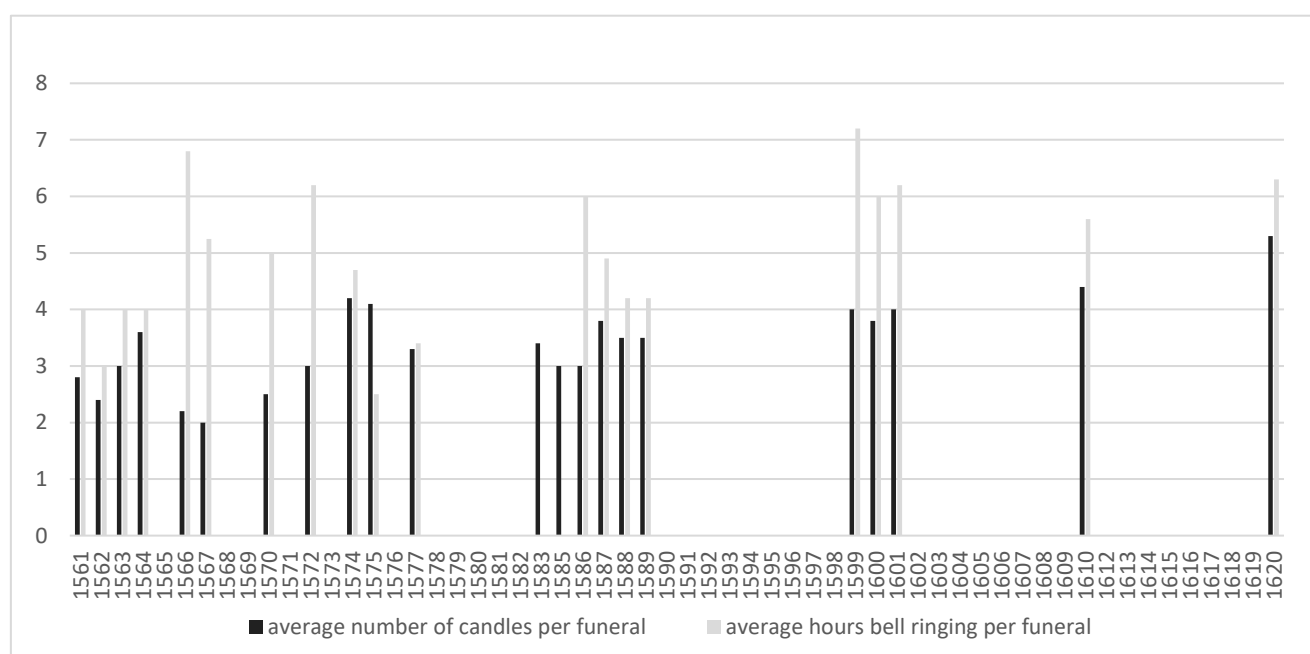


Figure 28 Graph average number of candles burnt and hours of bell ringing per funeral per year at St James (1561-1620)<sup>848</sup>

The transactions for the number of candles and hours of bell ringing shown in Figure 28 do not cover all the funerals at St James. Sometimes these transactions relate partly or almost wholly to those buried in the church building and sometimes they relate to other parishioners buried in the graveyard who had candles at their funerals as well. In any case, as already stated we do not have an overview of all the funerals, but mainly those of the families who could afford some funeral elements, such as candles or a pall. Figure 28 shows that over time, those who spent money on their funerals request more candles and

<sup>848</sup> In the accounts the word “huerposen” is used to indicate the duration of the tolling of the bells. It indicates the number or frequency the bells had to ring, probably per hour.

bell ringing on average. The increase in bell ringing is not spectacular but it is clear nonetheless. Depending on the period, there are different explanations for this evolution. In the period before the Calvinist Republic, the duration of bell ringing seems to have been more or less fixed, as we see the same combinations being repeated. There were funerals with 2 hours of bell ringing with the middle bell and funerals with 4 to 6 hours of bell ringing with the largest bell, depending of the deceased person's status. In a few exceptional occasions there was even more bell ringing. As the number of funerals with bell ringing remained small<sup>849</sup>, a few exceptions can easily lead to a large increase in the average for that year. This is what happened between 1566 and 1574, for example. Some of these individual cases are discussed in the next section.

During the Calvinist Regime bells were removed and the system changed. As we will see below, it was a few years before a bell was installed at St James again. The lack of different bells made differentiation harder, but the parishioners of St James quickly found new ways to use the single bell to display religious and social status. For many funerals a few hours of bell ringing was enough, but the more wealthy had up to 12 hours of bell ringing. The averages did not change dramatically. However, the whole practice of bell ringing changed and this will be examined in more detail in the next section.

A similar evolution can be seen in the number of candles bought per funeral, with the difference that there was a strong decrease in 1566 and 1567. In the years following iconoclasm the purchase of candles increased again. After the disruption of activities during Calvinist rule, the number of candles used in funerals recovered and continued to rise.

The importance of pomp, decoration and funeral apparati would have fluctuated with time and cultural-religious developments. It is hard to distil the reasons for the changes from the evolution observed. The importance of taking other parishioners' funerals as an example is undeniable. Funerals at other churches would also have influenced parishioners' ideas on the ideal funeral. An interesting case in point are the obsequies performed for Charles V in Brussels in 1559. Schraven claims they are still regarded as the most lavish of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The funeral apparato of Brussels would prove decisive in the development of funeral apparati in the following centuries.<sup>850</sup> Stephanie Shrader too

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<sup>849</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 346, fo 9 vo: sometimes the accounts only mentioned four funerals with bell ringing in a year.

<sup>850</sup> Schraven, *Festive Funerals in Early Modern Italy. The Art and Culture of Conspicuous Commemoration*, 55–57, 60–69. This was not only due to the impressive procession and lavish funeral apparato itself, but mainly because of the engravings of the procession and material aspects of the funeral rites. Margaret of Parma paid for a series of engravings of the procession, and 33 prints with legends in five languages were distributed across the Empire. Furthermore, a great number of descriptions of the event were in circulation. The procession, which had an

has analysed the funeral procession in Brussels for Charles V and its political use by Philip II.<sup>851</sup> Furthermore, Krista De Jonge has pointed out how funerary art changed in the Netherlands during the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>852</sup>

Another factor that influenced funeral culture was beliefs about death and the afterlife. The 16<sup>th</sup> century was a forum for many changing ideas about hell, Purgatory and intercession for the dead. It was not only outspoken Protestants who criticised or showed scepticism about Purgatory. Regional studies on Catholicism in France have shown that the doctrine of Purgatory lost overt adherence in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> and late 16<sup>th</sup> century. However, in the 1560s many Catholics also wrote pamphlets on this topic to defend the Catholic view on Purgatory and post-mortem intercession (confirmed by the Council of Trent). The catechism of the Council of Trent significantly furthered the dissemination of this doctrine.<sup>853</sup>

As mentioned earlier when discussing the fall in expenditure for founded masses at St James, a new dynamic within Catholicism itself could explain a decline or change in certain traditions. The importance parishioners placed on lavish funerals in the church illustrates that they wished to be remembered and prayed for. Belief in Purgatory was obviously still strong. Although social positioning was clearly one of the reasons for elaborate funerals, parishioners also regarded such ceremonies to be a pious act that showed loyalty to the Catholic church and emphasised their Catholic identity. This affirmation of loyalty was considered important, especially in the aftermath of the religious crises, and it went hand in hand with the rejection of Protestantism.<sup>854</sup>

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allegorical ship at its focal point, was used to illustrate the political power of the late emperor and reinforce the image as Philip II as the rightful successor. A detailed description of the various rituals and sceneries used during the ceremony are beyond the scope of this study. However, several elements were essential for an elite funeral and are worth mentioning, as they would have been considered exemplary. For example, 24 horses were offered to the cathedral (St Gudula) and inside a *chapelle ardente* with a baldachin structure held 3,000 candles and was decorated with a great number of coats of arms. Unlike the allegorical ship used in the procession, the *chapelle ardente* did not have a strong iconographic design. The obsequies of Charles V in Spain and Italy from this period, however, did have sophisticated iconography and used paintings, emblems and sculptures to depict the political victories of the deceased and symbols to illustrate his power and status.

<sup>851</sup> Stephanie Shrader, 'Greater than He Ever Was. Ritual and Power in Charles V' 1558 Funeral', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 49 (1998): 69–71.

<sup>852</sup> Krista De Jonge, 'Les Fondations Funéraires de La Haute Noblesse Des Anciens Pays-Bas Dans La Première Moitié Du XVI<sup>e</sup> Siècle', in *Demeures d'éternité. Eglises et Chapelles Funéraires Aux XVe et XVI<sup>e</sup> Siècles.*, De Architectura (Paris: Éditions A. et J. Picard, 2005), 139–40. In particular, the Antwerp sculptor Cornelis Floris played an important role in creating tombs "à l'antique" from the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century onwards. He and his commissioners were also influenced by novel architectural ideas of the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>853</sup> Tingle, *Purgatory and Piety in Brittany 1480-1720*.

<sup>854</sup> Ranson, 'Brugge Na de Reconciliatie Met Filips II. De Rol van Het Stadsbestuur in de Constructie van de Katholieke Stadsgemeenschap (1584-1598)', 64, 68–71; Tingle, *Purgatory and Piety in Brittany 1480-1720*. Jens

In addition, the very act of paying large amounts to the parish church for one's funeral aided the church. Not only did this help the church's finances, but it also supported the liturgical programme and decorum of the church through the services, candles, decoration and bell ringing. In this way, the ceremonial for the deceased was also essential for the here and now, and focused on the living community of the parish.

#### 5.4.2.5 Differences between funerals

The expenditure of one wealthy parishioner could skyrocket the income from funerals. An example is the burial of Jan Van der Varent in 1564-65, who was the attorney general of the Council of Flanders and a churchwarden of St James. His grave in the church (*vrije sepulture*), the best pall and cloths to decorate the high altar cost his family 3 pounds and 10 shillings (or 840 deniers). His heirs paid the churchwardens another 9 shillings for the ringing of bells (5 hours with largest bell) and his last will dictated that the church would be donated the 12 Flemish ell (more than 8 metres) of linen cloth used for his funeral. He also offered a "*keyserscroon*" with a value of 82 deniers. The family of Van der Varent spent at least 1030 deniers on the funeral and bequest for the church, excluding the cost of the linen cloth.<sup>855</sup> This was not all, as in the following accounts (1566-1567), we find his name on the list of annual masses celebrated for the dead. His family also paid for the foundation of masses for his soul.<sup>856</sup>

A similarly lavish funeral was held for Lady sGruters, who died the same year. Although she paid a little less for her grave, the palls and cloth decorations, the accounts reveal that the tomb was located in the high choir, the most prestigious place in the church.<sup>857</sup> She had the same bell ringing as Van der Varent and left a bequest for the churchwardens: 20 shillings and woollen broadcloth to decorate the altars.<sup>858</sup>

Another parishioner who had a sumptuous funeral was Raphael Van der Sare. He had been a churchwarden of St James in 1538 and was one in the year he died (1561-1562 accounts). In 1545-1548 he had been an alderman of the *Keure* and in 1551-1555 an alderman of the *Gedele*.<sup>859</sup> The best pall was used for the funeral, the high altar was covered

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Ranson points out that in the case of Bruges, after 1584 Protestant funerals were increasingly forced out of the city, stripped of ceremony and the gathering of people.

<sup>855</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 344, fo 7 vo; 344, fo 8.

<sup>856</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 345, fo 9 ro.

<sup>857</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no, 344, fo 7 vo.

<sup>858</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no, 344, fo 8.

<sup>859</sup> Annelies Somers, *Inventaris van Het Oud Archief van de Kerkfabriek En Parochie Sint-Jacobs Te Gent Met Inbegrip van de Parochiale Instellingen. (1231) 1302-1885*, Rijksarchief Te Gent Inventarissen 91 (Brussels: Algemeen Rijksarchief, 2011), 41-43. SAG, *Memorieboek van Gent, deel II, 1501-1572*, p. 240, 247, 257, 279; RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 341, fo 18 vo.

in black cloth and his final resting place was a *vrije sepulture*. The largest bell was rung for 6 hours. Furthermore, the second best pall was placed on the catafalque (*d'imbare*) for 6 weeks and the small pall was ordered for anniversary masses.<sup>860</sup> Thus at least 45.5 shillings or 546 deniers was paid for Raphael Van der Sare's funeral. The amount does include the concession for his grave, which would have been at least another 20 shillings. The grave and pall together constituted the biggest expense of the funeral.

Table 6 in the Appendix combines the information on the most elaborate funerals at St James between 1560 and the beginning of 1600. It makes clear that the most elaborate funerals were, as expected, for the prominent members of the parish. Men, women and children from elite families were buried in the church with a luxurious pall, hangings and the ringing of bells. In particular, men who had served in the magistracy or/and held a position as a churchwarden or member of the parochial institution for poor relief and their wives had lavish funerals. There was no apparent difference between the funerals of men and women in this period at St James.

Of all the elements of the funeral, the tomb was the heaviest financial burden if the family chose a burial in the choir. In almost all the cases studied, where the deceased was buried in the choir the executors of the will paid at least 2 pounds or 480 deniers for the tomb. A burial in the choir went hand in hand with other expensive funeral elements, such as black hangings on the altars, the best pall and several hours of bell ringing. Parishioners who were buried elsewhere would sometimes also use these elements in one form or another for their funerals, although the black hangings and decoration of altars were items that only the most wealthy could afford. The element that differed most for those buried in the church (and sometimes for those buried outside) was the ringing of bells and the use of a pall. The many options and price categories of bell ringing in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century make it ideal for studying differences in the status of parishioners.

The duration of bell ringing was systematically recorded in the churchwarden accounts. As mentioned above, before 1583 (account 357) different bells could be chosen for one's funeral. The duration of bell ringing in Table 6 in the Appendix refers to the use of the largest bell in the period 1561-1583, as the most prominent parishioners chose this bell for their funerals. The bells were destroyed during the Calvinist Republic, so there was no bell ringing at St James for a couple of years. It is not until the accounts of 1586-1587 and subsequent accounts that the use of bells during funerals is mentioned again. However, from 1586 to 1620 only one bell could be used.<sup>861</sup> As a result, after 1586 there was a larger range in the duration of bell ringing. For the funerals of the wealthiest parishioners, the bell was rung for much longer than before the start of Calvinist rule.

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<sup>860</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 341, fo 7 vo, 8, 10. A catafalque is the raised bier on which the coffin was placed for the funeral service.

<sup>861</sup> RAG, OKA, St Jacobs Gent, no 383, fo 15 vo. This is the first account to mention the use of the "*grootte clocke*". The use of this bell cost twice as much as the usual bell, namely 2 shillings per hour.

However, the price for the most elaborate bell ringing did not change much over time and both before and during Calvinist rule the parishioners paid a maximum of 12 to 13 shillings for bell ringing at a funeral.

In the first period (accounting year 1574-75), Françoise Deurnaghele, the widow of Philip van de Kethulle had the longest bell ringing (9 hours), even though the accounts suggest she was buried in Wondelghem. This was exceptional as other wealthy and prominent parishioners buried in the church in this period only had 4 to 6 hours of bell ringing at their funerals. The wife of alderman Lucas Cluetrijn and the widow of Jan Damman, Lord of Oomberghe, who had also been a churchwarden and alderman, were buried in the same accounting year and had “only” 6 and 5 hours of bell ringing respectively.<sup>862</sup> The Kethulle family was very prominent in Ghent and several of its members, including the father, brother and son of Philip Kethulle, were members of the magistracy during their careers. Three years after the death of Françoise Deurnaghele's, her son Frans Kethulle, Lord of Ryhove, played a leading role in the rebellion against King Philip II and Catholic rule that led to the period of Calvinist rule in Ghent.<sup>863</sup> This begs the question whether the excessive bell ringing should be seen as a statement or simply illustrates how a Catholic of high standing wished to be buried in this period.

After the new bell was installed at St James, it took a couple of years for new customs to be formed. The burial of the parish priest Adriaen de Bave in 1588, with 9 hours of bell ringing, set the course was for longer bell ringing. The following three years, the bell rang increasingly longer at elite funerals, after which the duration stabilized. At least until 1608, every year the most lavish funerals included bell ringing for 10 to 12 hours.<sup>864</sup> This is double the amount for the most prominent parishioners before 1578. The duration of bell ringing did not just depend on the wealth of the diseased. Just as with Adriaen de Bave, the funeral of the later parish priest Adriaen Van Loo in 1605 witnessed the longest bell ringing of that year (12 hours). Although the parish priest would have had wealth and certainly prestige, this shows that the significance of bell ringing went beyond displaying economic status and that it had a religious significance as well. It seems that no parishioner wanted to outperform his parish priest in this final ritual.<sup>865</sup>

Moreover, the duration of bell ringing did not just depend on religious belief and status. During the almost 20-year period of extended bell ringing, namely 9 to 12 hours for the most prominent parishioners, the burial of doctor Adriaen Meganck, who had also had a successful political career, seems somewhat low-key. We have little information on

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<sup>862</sup> RAG, OKA, St Jacobs Gent, no 351, fo 11 ro, 12 ro.

<sup>863</sup> Decavele and Coigneau, *Het Eind van Een Rebelse Droom. Opstellen over Het Calvinistisch Bewind Te Gent (1577-1584) En de Terugkeer van de Stad Onder de Gehoorzaamheid van de Koning van Spanje (17 September 1584)*, 32-35.

<sup>864</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 375, fo 39 vo; 376, fo 40 ro; 377, fo 43 ro.

<sup>865</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 375, fo 39 vo.



his grave and the use of a pall, but the accounts recorded only 5 hours of bell ringing. He had money and a deep interest in his parish church, shown by his bequest of 14 pounds (3360 deniers) to the churchwardens of St James for repairs to the church.<sup>866</sup> A possible explanation may be found in the funeral of his wife in 1567, almost 40 years earlier. Customs were different then and St James had different bells at its disposal. When Meganck's young wife was buried, the largest bell had rung 4 or 5 hours, which was at that time a fitting choice for someone of her high standing.<sup>867</sup> It is difficult to pinpoint the reasons why Adriaen Meganck chose only 5 hours of bell ringing in a period when 12 hours was standard for most prominent burials, but he may have decided to have a funeral comparable to the one of his deceased wife. Instead of following the bell ringing "fashion" of his day, he may have been looking back to the traditions of when his wife had been buried.

Indeed, a limited analysis of the most prestigious funerals at St James illustrates that the practice of having similar funeral elements for the various members of the same family was common. For most funerals of family members, however, the time between funerals was smaller than that between the funeral of Meganck and that of his wife, so the similarity is less surprising. For example, Willem De Leghe and his wife both had 6 hours of bell ringing.<sup>868</sup> Anselm Nieulant, who had served as the attorney general of the Council of Flanders, and his mother shared the same place of burial (choir) and both had 10 hours of bell ringing.<sup>869</sup> Exceptions seem to have been made for children, who did not always have the same bell ringing. However, for those buried in the church, the same tomb or place was normally used. For instance, in the period under study, Pieter Moens's young child, mother, son and daughter were all buried in the chapel of the basket makers.<sup>870</sup>

The relatively frequent appearance of children in these church burial records illustrates the harsh realities of 16<sup>th</sup>-century life, including for the wealthy. It is somewhat surprising to find their funerals also involved large sums of money, as child mortality was high in most families. Table 6 (in the Appendix) includes the funeral of the son of Guillaume Van Auweghen. The report on this funeral is especially moving as Guillaume Van Auweghen drew up the churchwarden accounts at the time and so had to describe the funeral and transactions himself. His words "the funeral of my son" (*de uutvaert van*

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<sup>866</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 376, fo 35 vo, 41 ro, 47 ro.

<sup>867</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 346, fo 9 vo.

<sup>868</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 357, fo 18 ro, 19 ro; 348, fo 14; 361, fo 17 ro, 18 ro, vo.

<sup>869</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 371, fo 34 ro, 36 ro; 372, fo 30 ro.

<sup>870</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 366, fo 50 vo; 369, fo 33 vo; 371, fo 34 vo, 36 vo. The difference between the funeral of Geraert de Sceppere and his daughter may also fall in this category. However, it is also possible that they were different because he died first and had no say in the funeral of his daughter.

*mijnen soone*”) express a daunting reality experienced by many families.<sup>871</sup> Indeed, many more listings in the accounts refer to deceased children. In the period 1561-1600, at least 55 children were buried in the church. The figures are probably higher as I only looked at those transactions that specifically mentioned a child with the words “*kint*”, “*kinde*” or “*kindeken*”. Many other transactions which named the deceased as a son or daughter of a parishioner are not included in this figure, as these could be referring to adult parishioners. And of course, these child deaths are only the tip of the iceberg. Many more children would have been buried in the churchyard without this being reported in the accounts.

However, it is interesting to note that church burial was not just for children from wealthy families. Various references suggest that some children came from a middle class family. Sometimes they are referred to as child of a Spanjard, child on the Steendam<sup>872</sup>, other times only the job of the father and the streetname were registered.<sup>873</sup> If the child's father was considered a prominent parishioner, one would expect see the full name of the father in the accounts. The price of a child's funeral mainly consisted of the cost of the tomb and a smaller sum for a pall, which remained relatively constant over time, except for the three last years of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. There was, however, no bell ringing for children. Up until 1597, the price of a tomb for a child was between 2 shillings (24 deniers) and 5 shillings (60 deniers) and the pall was 1 or 2 shillings (12 or 24 deniers).<sup>874</sup> From 1597 onwards, certain tombs of children cost up to 10 shillings (120 deniers), depending on their location. This was the case for a burial in the chapel of St Barbara<sup>875</sup>, the chapel of St Catelyne<sup>876</sup>, the chapel of the stocking makers<sup>877</sup>, the chapel of the basket makers<sup>878</sup> and other places in the “*keercke boven*” (church above)<sup>879</sup>, the area of the choir. Tombs for children in other areas, especially in the “*keercke beneden*” (church below) remained in the price range of 2 to 5 shillings.<sup>880</sup> Apart from the larger price differences that are recorded for child burials at the very end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the practice of child burial

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<sup>871</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 371, fo 1; 384, fo 1; 385, fo 1; 386 fo 15r.

<sup>872</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 361, fo 15 vo. “*kindt eenen Spaengaert*” and “*een kindeken op den Steendam*”.

<sup>873</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 357, fo 18 ro. “*een twijnders kindeken bij 't Plaetseken*”.

<sup>874</sup> Kristof Dombrecht, ‘Plattelandsgemeenschappen, Lokale Elites En Ongelijkheid in Het Vlaamse Kustgebied (14de -16de Eeuw). Case Study: Dudzele Ambacht.’ (Doctoral dissertation, Ghent University, 2014), 323. Other case studies confirm this practice of using bell ringing only for adults or communicants. RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 341, fo 7 vo; 343, fo 7 vo; 348, fo 12 ro; 349, fo 13 ro, 14 ro; 351, fo 10 vo; 357, fo 16 ro, 18 vo; 359, fo 16 vo; 361, fo 15 vo, 16 vo; 362, fo 16 ro; 364, fo 17 ro, 18 vo.

<sup>875</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 366, fo 49 vo.

<sup>876</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no, 368, fo 31 vo; 369, fo 33 ro.

<sup>877</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no, 368, fo 32 ro.

<sup>878</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no, 368, fo 32 vo; 369, fo 33 ro.

<sup>879</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no, 368, fo 32 ro; 369, fo 32 vo.

<sup>880</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no, 366, fo 47 vo–50 vo, 53 ro; 368, fo 31 ro, etc.

at St James did not show much differentiation. These burials seemed to be less a matter of status and more a family matter. With the exception of the three last years of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the money spent on a child's burial in the church was generally around 5 shillings. The main differences between children's funerals were related to the place where the child was buried, which was usually where other family members lay.

Sometimes the accumulation of loss of family members, or more specifically of children, is striking. Some fathers are mentioned several times in the transactions of children's funerals. Pieter Moens, the churchwarden mentioned above, lost a daughter in 1597, a younger child in 1599, and his mother and a son in 1601. All were buried in the chapel of the basket makers.<sup>881</sup> In 1588, Anthéunis Inghelbrecht buried both his children ("*beede zijn kinderen*"<sup>882</sup>) at St James and four years later Pieter Arents and his wife lost three of their children.<sup>883</sup> Nicolays Neyt's children both died in 1597, at different times. The accounts of that year first mention the tomb for his small child ("*cleyn kindekin*") and a few pages later appears "*kint van Nicolaus Neyt inde Langhemunte, begraven inde kercke beneden*".<sup>884</sup> The family of Jan Claerbaut must also have experienced an extremely difficult period. In 1598 they lost a first child, the following year they had to bury a second child on 10<sup>th</sup> November and a third child on 14<sup>th</sup> December. All three were buried in the chapel of St Catheline and each time Jan Claerbaut paid the higher amount of 10 shillings for the tomb and 2 shillings for the pall, thus paying a total of 432 deniers.<sup>885</sup>

This large amount spent on the burial of his three children is rather exceptional, but even the lower price of a burial in the nave was high enough to explain why not everyone could bury their children in the church. As mentioned earlier, the large sums paid for a burial in the church are not necessarily only based on family values and social expectations. The belief in life after death and the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory would have been central to the decision to bury the child in the church. Parents wanted their children to get to heaven as fast as possible and believed that a burial place in church, close to prayers and liturgy, would hasten the purification of the child's soul. Bogaers' study of Utrecht also illustrates how children's funerals were considered important in the community. Specific regulations assured a wide attendance of the neighbours at funerals of both children and adults.<sup>886</sup>

The churchwarden's accounts are sources that privilege the historian's insight into the lives of the more wealthy members of the parishioners. But as these funerals illustrate,

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<sup>881</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no, 366, fo 50 vo; 369, fo 33 vo; 371, fo 34 vo, 36 vo.

<sup>882</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no, 361, fo 15 vo.

<sup>883</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no, 364, fo 17 ro.

<sup>884</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no, 366, fo 48 ro, 50 vo.

<sup>885</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 368, fo 31 vo; 369, fo 33 ro, 33 vo, 34 ro.

<sup>886</sup> Bogaers, *Aards, Betrokken En Zelfbewust. De Verwevenheid van Cultuur En Religie in Katholiek Utrecht, 1300-1600*, 96–97.

they also are witnesses to the hardships of the privileged in society. As death comes to all people, rich and poor, these cases illustrate what was happening in society as a whole. Many poor families would have lost their children as well. Infectious diseases was the most likely cause of child deaths, especially in the period 1597-1601. In account number 366, which covers 1597-1598, at least 12 children were buried, account 368 records six child deaths and the following account mentions eight funerals for children. Compared to the average of two children buried in the church each year in the previous period, this is a staggeringly high number. Indeed, a contributing factor would have been the plague. After some years of calm, the plague returned to Ghent in 1597 and most likely it increased mortality among children for a few years.<sup>887</sup>

Although most transactions concerning funeral elements refer to the middle class and the elite, occasionally they point to the funeral of poorer people. In 1570 two candles were bought for a “*schamel uutvaert*” (a shabby funeral) and in 1572 the old pall was used for the funerals of poor women at least three times.<sup>888</sup> The use of a pall and candles for a poor woman are mentioned a few more times in subsequent accounts<sup>889</sup> and their use in the funerals of poor parishioners became more frequent from 1597 onwards. In the accounts of 1597-1598, the small pall (“*cleen pelleken*”) was used twice for the funeral of poor parishioners, once for a woman and once for a man.<sup>890</sup> The accounts of 1599-1600 mention only one funeral of a poor woman.<sup>891</sup> The following set of accounts mention the sale of two candles for the funeral of a poor woman, and the small pall was used twice – once for the funeral of a poor woman and once to bury a “Spaniard”.<sup>892</sup> In 1601-1602 the small pall was used eight times for an impoverished parishioner.<sup>893</sup> The following subsequent set of accounts show the same pattern.<sup>894</sup>

The use of the word “*aerm*” (poor) in the accounts is unambiguous and there is no detailed explanation of what it means.<sup>895</sup> There were different degrees of poverty and it is clear that not all the funerals of the poor made it into the accounts. It is not obvious

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<sup>887</sup> Vandeputte, ‘De Pest Te Gent 1568-1640. Bijdrage Tot de Studie van de Pest-Epidemieën in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden.’, 190–91, 227.

<sup>888</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 348, fo 11 vo; 349, fo 14 ro, 14 vo.

<sup>889</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 354, fo 15 ro; 358, fo 16 ro; 359, fo 17 ro.

<sup>890</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 366, fo 47 v, fo. 48 ro.

<sup>891</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 369, fo 35 ro.

<sup>892</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 370, fo 29 ro, 31 ro.

<sup>893</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 371, fo 33, 34.

<sup>894</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 372, fo 39 ro; 377, fo 42 vo; 378, fo 50 ro; 381, fo 22 ro.

<sup>895</sup> Dombrecht, ‘Plattelandsgemeenschappen, Lokale Elites En Ongelijkheid in Het Vlaamse Kustgebied (14de - 16de Eeuw). Case-Study: Dudzele Ambacht.’, 28–31. Research on village parishes shows that some parish priests described a very large segment of the village as being poor.

from the accounts whether these needy parishioners were somehow able to set aside the 12 deniers themselves or whether the cost of the pall or candles was paid by another parishioner or organization, such as the Table of the Holy Spirit. This organization is known to have helped with funeral costs. Twice the accounts mention the funeral of a mentally ill person. In 1577 two candles were bought for a “*simpele*” who had lived in the hospital of St John (St Jans huus ten dulle) and in 1597 a “*simpelen jonghen*” who had lived on the Vrijdagmarkt was buried in a tomb in the church of St James.<sup>896</sup> Clearly, relatives, friends or members of charitable organisations sometimes arranged for the funeral of these weaker members of society.

The more common funeral element in a funeral for a poor parishioner from the 1570s onwards was pall: its growing importance is reflected in its more common use (or registration of this use in the churchwarden accounts). As discussed previously, the use of a pall increased strongly in the 1570s, with more people using palls for plain funerals and occasionally a burial in the churchyard. This is in contrast to several years earlier, when a pall was only occasionally mentioned in the accounts for such funerals. Its widespread use would have come with the belief that it was a basic element of a funeral, at which point some would have considered it essential for the funerals of poor people as well. As mentioned above, parishioners could still display their status by choosing better quality and more expensive palls in combination with the other funeral elements, such as the tomb, candles and bell ringing.

#### 5.4.2.6 Legacies

Table 6 in the Appendix, which discusses the different funerals of elite parishioners, includes the bequests or legacies these parishioners made to the group of churchwardens of St James. However, they give limited information on the bequests and decisions the testators made as a whole. A detailed understanding of gift giving and donations through legacies in the parish of St James would require a more extensive study of a wide range of sources. In this regard, the churchwarden accounts have serious limitations. Apart from the churchwardens, the cotidiane and institution for poor relief also welcomed donations. Furthermore, people could give to institutions (hospitals, convents, parish churches, etc.) and people outside the parish. Investigating such donations is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the accounts do give information on legacies for the church building or churchwardens and these enable us to make an interesting observation.

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<sup>896</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 354, fo 15 ro; 366, fo 48 vo.

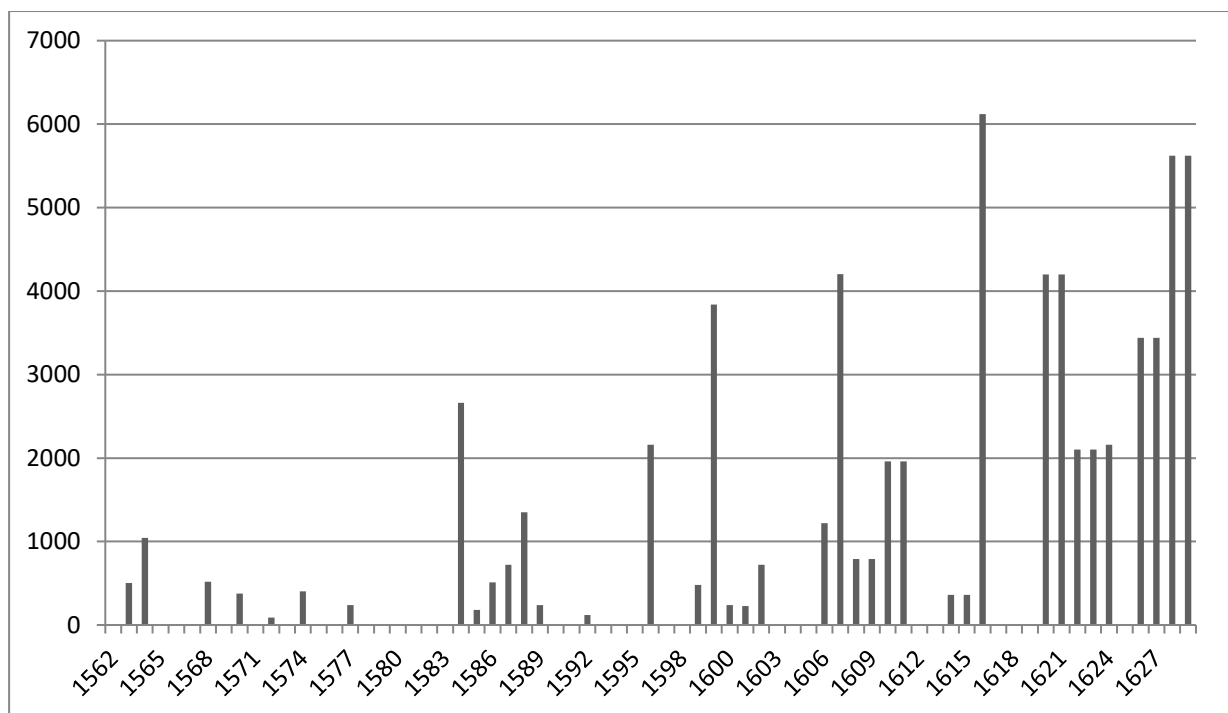


Figure 29 Graph annual income of the churchwardens of St James from legacies in Flemish deniers groten (1562-1630).

The evolution in the annual income of St James resulting from legacies shows a similar trend to that of the income from funerals for the period 1561-1630. The only difference is that the growth in legacies took off a little later, only after 1584, and it fluctuated more. These fluctuations are not surprising, as one large sum donated by a wealthy testator can make a significant difference to the figures. Table 2 in Chapter 3 is further illustration of this. Indeed, some of the most wealthy parishioners did not donate a sum to the churchwardens (other institutions may have benefited from their legacies). Others gave up to 16 pounds (3840 deniers) in the period 1561-1600.<sup>897</sup> Despite these fluctuations, the general trend indicates that there was an increase in legacies benefiting the church(wardens) of St James. This is in contrast to the period before the Calvinist Republic, when the total income from bequests had decreased over the years.

## 5.5 Conclusion

This chapter discusses two important aspects of religious activity in the parish of St James during the final decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. These parish activities were influenced by

<sup>897</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 369, fo 34 vo.

various developments and attitudes. The spread of Protestant and humanist ideas and the Tridentine reaction strongly influenced the practice of preaching in the parish in 1566 and the following years. The citizens of Ghent were intrigued by the debates of Catholics and Protestants and attended the sermons, organized by both groups, in large numbers. This hunger for religious knowledge was fertile ground for Catholic teaching after the end of hedge preaching in 1567. In particular, Tridentine-inspired priests used sermons to inform people about the new teachings of the Catholic Church. At St James, and in Ghent in general, the number of sermons that people could attend was high in this period, especially because of the visiting Jesuits and the arrival of the first bishop of Ghent, Jansenius. After some years, some of the previously informally organized sermons became more institutionalized and in 1574 the churchwardens of St James started to record all payments for priests who preached during Lent, Advent and other periods.

These developments illustrate that curiosity and interest in doctrine, which led many citizens of Ghent to go and listen to the Protestant sermons, were simultaneously used by the Catholic Church to defend itself and teach “new” Tridentine ideas. Doctrine mattered to parishioners, and because of this the Counter-Reformation stood a chance of succeeding in Ghent. If parishioners had really been indifferent, as Cloet and his followers have claimed, people would have ignored the organized sermons.

Despite Ghent’s interest in and openness to new teachings, tradition remained very important. For the Catholic Church, this characteristic of civic culture was, just like curiosity, a double-edged sword. Citizens that considered themselves Catholic did not seem willing to change some of their habits and culture to accommodate the new regulations of the Church. The bishop seemed unable to convince Ghent's citizens to observe and honour all the holy days or to change practices concerning confession, mass and the use of church space. His continued pleas for people to reconcile might be explained by a growing number of Protestants among the population, but it could also mean that traditional Catholics felt they were not in need of reconciliation, even if they had attended the hedge preaching previously. However, the love of tradition also bound parishioners to their parish church and specific Catholic celebrations. The procession of St Lieven is a clear example of this, although here too civic pride played a role. Tradition could thus act as a force for continuity and restoration.

Tradition could go hand in hand with Tridentine values. This was the case in funeral culture. Trent had affirmed the doctrine of Purgatory and encouraged a proper and respectful use of the church building. The tradition of burying people with proper funeral elements according to their status was thus encouraged. Furthermore, the religious acts of the funeral and burial were not only markers of Catholic identity, but also ideal agents for social positioning within the parish. As funeral culture satisfied various needs, both social and religious, and could be controlled by parishioners, this culture flourished during the last decades of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Neither iconoclasm nor the period of Calvinist Rule could put a stop to parishioners' interest in lavish funerals and bequests for their

church. The 1560s and 1570s witnessed more pomp being added to funerals. This evolution would continue into the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Although the growth in bequests and expenditure on funerals may signify a change in many aspects of local life, such as attitudes to death, the wish to be remembered, devotion, aesthetics, the function of the church, social (group) identity, it coincides with some of the evolutions seen in the previous chapter. It demonstrates that parishioners were increasingly active and involved in specific activities in the parish and parish church. Furthermore, previous chapters have indicated that the attention of Catholics was not limited to these more personal aspects of parish life. In the same period, large sums of money were offered to the churchwardens to tackle repairs to the church building. These gifts, together with the parishioners' expenses for funerals, secured a fund that the churchwardens could use during the years of crisis. They reveal a strong bond between parishioners and their parish church in a period when ecclesiastical control was minimal.

Although the practice of anniversaries and the celebration of foundations were based on similar ideas of Purgatory and commemoration, this practice changed in a very different way. It was strongly disrupted by the period of Calvinist rule, as it depended on institutional and financial stability. Furthermore, the disruption can be explained by a shift in the focus of Catholics. According to Bossy, Catholics altered their focus during periods of crisis in order to support the living community and those practices that most expressed Catholic identity. Indeed, whereas funeral practices and bequests could easily be controlled by the living community of St James and was ideal for conveying Catholic identity, the continued celebration of foundations required more ecclesiastical organization and was less a marker of the living community.



## Conclusion

The recovery of the Catholic Church in the Southern Low Countries after the iconoclasm of 1566 and the Reconquista of 1584-85 took various paths, depending mainly on local circumstances. Therefore, the focus on the parish and more specifically the parish of St James in Ghent has brought nuance to our understanding of the early Counter-Reformation. Indeed, important religious, social and material changes took place in the parish of St James between 1560 and 1600. In this urban case study, Catholic Reform has proven to be a process of negotiation in which ordinary parishioners played a crucial role, which was already developing in the 1560s. While the older historiography generally considers the peaceful Twelve Years' Truce (1609-1621) as essential for the implementation of the Counter-Reformation in the Southern Low Countries, our case suggests that deep periods of crisis were accelerators (to varying degrees) in this process.

For the Low Countries, 1560-1600 was a turbulent period marked by serious religious conflict and extreme political changes. The outbreak of iconoclasm in 1566 brought the first shockwave. Yet the repressive political and military structures imposed on the Low Countries to counter the iconoclasts and the spread of Reformed ideas were also perceived as an aggression against local traditions. After 1566, the Low Countries were in a constant state of unrest and even war due to the continued spread of Reformed ideas in tandem with the dissatisfaction with the repressive measures and political and economic reforms of the central government. The Dutch Revolt became very real for Ghent with the establishment of Calvinist rule in 1577. During the following seven years some medieval local privileges were restored, but most traditions, political systems and religious structures were turned upside down. Catholicism was repressed and again church interiors were smashed and left destroyed and unused for several years. When Alexander Farnese brought Ghent back under Habsburg rule in 1584, he also cleared the way for the restoration of the churches. Political authority was restored relatively quickly, but the ecclesiastical structures needed more time for recovery. In addition, Ghent experienced serious demographic losses as thousands of people left the city in the following years.

Despite the confusion, strong resilience could be witnessed at the level of the parish. At St James, various factors worked in favour of stability and the recovery of the community, the building and religious practices after the Troubles. During the first phase of the crisis, namely the months of hedge preaching and iconoclasm in 1566, religious differences proved to be less divisive within the local community of Ghent than the older historiography has suggested. The shared communal values were of prime importance and they kept Ghent relatively peaceful even when “new” religious ideas were introduced. Importantly, discussions about doctrine and contact with dissident ideas were not new as Ghent was an international trade centre and home to a great variety of religious orders. Civic identity and social norms prevailed over religious differences. Therefore, there was little to no bloodshed among Ghent citizens after the first iconoclasm. On the whole, the strong repression of Protestantism both before and after the iconoclasm clashed more with local traditions and civic values than did Protestantism itself. As a result, the Ghent Catholics took only limited protective measures to protect church buildings, and there was little action taken against Protestantism. Judith Pollmann, who has observed similar attitudes in other localities in the Low Countries in this period, points out that this “passivity” was in stark contrast with the attitudes of French Catholics. The different political and religious context in France led to people taking matters into their own hands and instigating many violent attacks on Protestants.

However, the “lack” of violent action in the Netherlands does not mean that Catholics were apathetic or uninterested in religion in this period. Iconoclasts were condemned and punished as they had defied the social order and attacked the parish church. People were aware that this had led to a great loss of sacral, communal, memorial and traditional material culture. The church building and its most important architectural elements and objects were repaired relatively quickly and used again in daily services and annual feast days. This was only possible thanks to the gifts of parishioners. A part of the parish population, however, seemed less invested in specific church activities such as mass, while other traditional religious festivities attracted many participants. The attendance of the hedge preaching events in the summer of 1566 also indicates that many Ghent citizens were interested in religious debates. However, it was not only the Protestant preaching that proved to be a success. The sermons given by the Catholic clergy in Ghent in 1566 were widely attended as well. This interest in religious doctrine and debate was fertile ground for the intensified organization of Catholic sermons in the following years.

The establishment of the Calvinist Republic in Ghent about a decade later – leading to a new outbreak of iconoclasm – would completely alter the socio-religious landscape. Ghent Catholics were actively repressed; Catholic material culture was damaged. The effects would last decades. Polarization was an inevitable consequence, since Protestantism manifested itself in this period as a radical and uncompromising enemy of Catholicism and a political opponent of the Habsburg regime. Religious co-existence proved impossible, particularly in the case of Ghent. In this context, the fall of the

Calvinist Republic in 1584 was a turning point for Catholicism in Ghent. Despite the enormous damage to the church of St James, the demographic loss of a large portion of parishioners and the lack of a strong ecclesiastical organisation, the parish showed remarkable resilience. The great fervour with which at least a portion of the parishioners supported the church of St James is highlighted by, among other things, the reorganization of the parish, the strong increase in income through gifts from parishioners and the immediate start of restoration work in 1584.

The study of the material church in this period of recovery has proven indispensable. After all, this aspect of piety had been the main target during the outbreaks of iconoclasm. The reconstruction of the material world of the parish was a reflection of the parishioners' ideas on piety and religion. Continuity of tradition was one motive, but the choice of repairs was far from neutral. As one by one, the objects and structures contested by Protestantism were restored to their full glory, Catholics were making clear claims about their beliefs, both after the first outbreak of iconoclasm in 1566 and after 1584. These restoration works were clearly part of a Counter-Reformation from below; the agency of a group of parishioners in this process is undeniable.

The interest of parishioners in ideology and their contribution to a local variant of the Counter-Reformation is furthermore confirmed by the study of (socio-)religious practices and piety. As early as 1566, the success of both the hedge preaching and the organized Catholic sermons were indications that many citizens of Ghent cared deeply about religion. However, before the establishment of Calvinist rule in Ghent, it seemed that civic values played a greater role in defining one's identity, even overshadowing religious identity. After 1584, the major role that parishioners played in financing the repairs and the growing importance of funeral culture point to a shift in priorities. The parishioners of Ghent wanted to stress their Catholic identity more and more through various Catholic practices, such as an elaborate funeral in church. The fact that these practices also enhanced their status shows that the growing importance of a Counter-Reformation identity continued to go hand in hand with social concerns. At the financial level, the gifts for repairs and payments made for individual funerals aided the parish and provided St James with the funds necessary for further restoration. The renewed interior, utensils, decor and elaborate rituals, in turn, increased the attraction of the church.

Still, depending on the perspective of the onlooker, the first decades following 1585 were not entirely a success story. Some Catholic practices changed or almost disappeared in these years. Examples include the renting of seating in the church and the celebration of anniversaries. Furthermore, despite the spectacular recovery, by the end of the 16th century the church of St James still lacked some fundamental features, such as multiple church bells. However, the road to further recovery had been paved: the following decades would witness costly purchases and restoration projects.

Early modern Catholicism at St James was marked by both continuity and change. During the first decades after 1584, survival of certain parish traditions was an important mark of the grass roots movement to restore Catholicism. Locals were motivated to pay for the repairs and the funerals because it strengthened their religious and social identity, and because they wanted to continue traditions and further parish pride in opposition to Reformed ideas. They were not necessarily seeking to alter Catholic practices or have Tridentine decrees implemented. On the contrary, there was overt opposition to specific changes demanded by the Council of Trent. Tridentine legislation was very difficult to implement because of local resistance. But in an altered political and religious context, change was inevitable. In the realm of the parish, this was mainly manifested in the material culture and devotional practices. The focus on Eucharistic devotion and the preference for increasingly elaborate funerals are concrete examples of how local Catholicism from below matched certain Tridentine ideas and contributed to the creation of an early modern Catholic identity.

This conclusion agrees in various ways with two other recent case studies regarding the Southern Netherlands in the early modern period. Both Suykerbuyk<sup>898</sup> and Muller<sup>899</sup> have studied Catholic action from the perspective of a negotiated process in which the ecclesiastical hierarchy and local laity are the main agents. They considered material culture to be key to understanding religious change in their studies. Similarly, it has proven to be important in the case of St James in Ghent. Like Suykerbuyk's research on Zoutleeuw, the present case study has mainly brought to attention the agency of the laity in religious change. Muller's study on St James in Antwerp considers the laity, but highlights the role of the ecclesiastical hierarchy in the changes. The idea of continuity is also less present in Muller's work than it is in the thesis on Zoutleeuw. However, apart from the sources and perspectives used, a reason for the different conclusions of the two studies is related to the period under study. Muller mainly focused on the 17th century, when ecclesiastical control in the Southern Netherlands was being thoroughly reformed and becoming more centralized. While the ecclesiastical structure and influence of the Catholic church never disappeared, it had a different impact on local Catholic practice in the 16th century. During the crises of the late 16th century, the case of Ghent illustrates a variety of strong bottom-up processes that enabled the continuation of Catholicism. During the 17th century, the dynamics of the negotiation would have been different, including for Ghent. Although the long-term perspective is important, the use of limited time frames in case studies enables a unique close-up on and dissection of society during specific events. In the case of St James it has enabled us to uncover the agency of groups

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<sup>898</sup> Suykerbuyk, 'The Matter of Piety. Material Culture in Zoutleeuw's Church of Saint Leonard (c. 1450-1620)'.

<sup>899</sup> Muller, *St. Jacob's Antwerp Art and Counter Reformation in Rubens's Parish Church*.

that at other moments in history are overshadowed by the seemingly more impactful actions of others.



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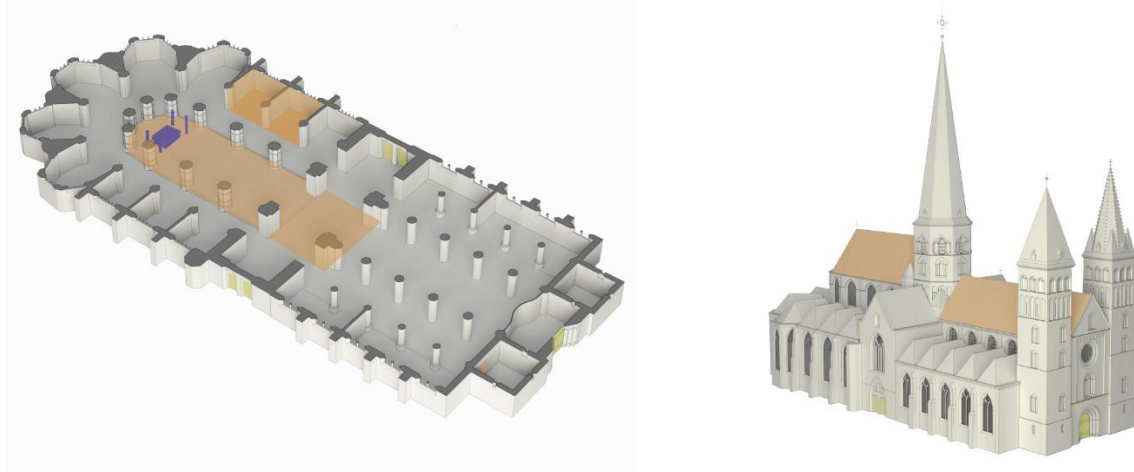
## Appendix



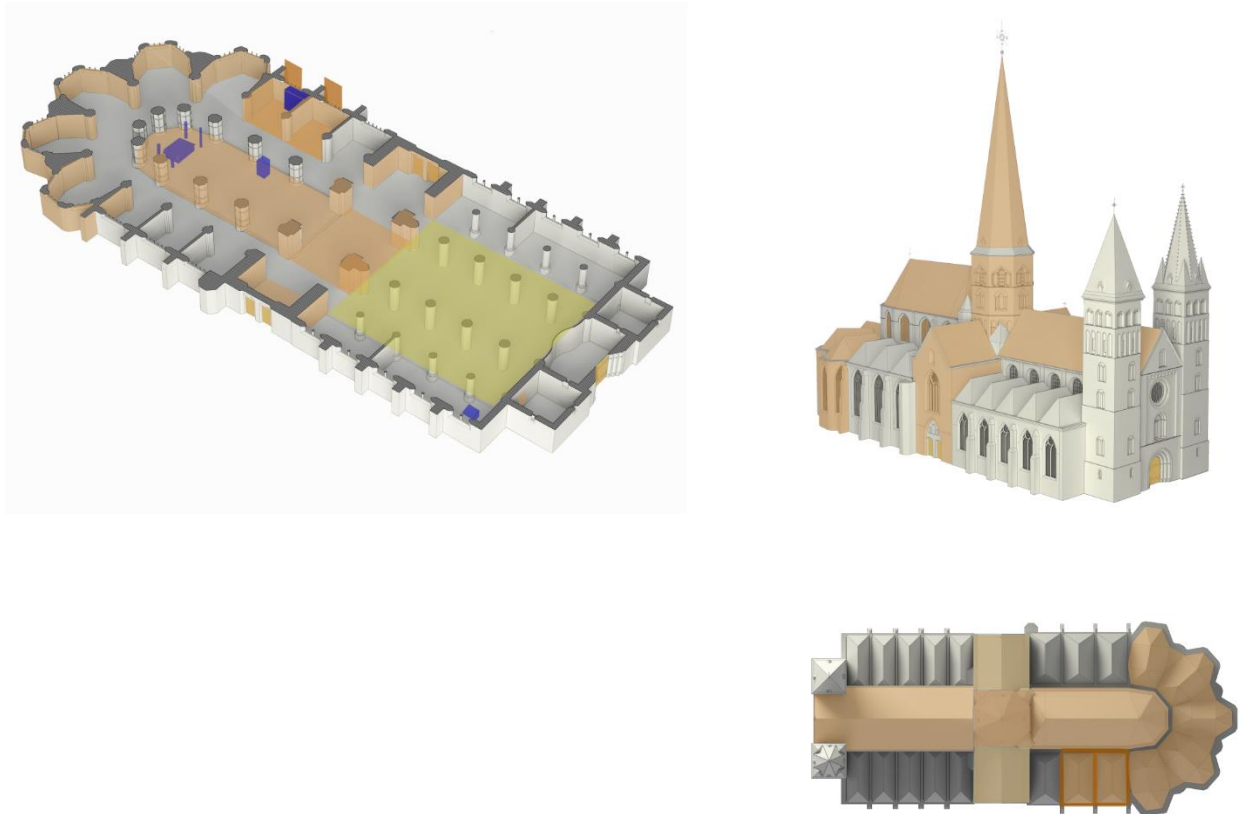
Figure 30 Visualization first phases of the restauration of the church of St James after 1584.<sup>900</sup>

### Restoration works 1584-1586

First works: October-December 1584 on floor-plan and perspective on exterior



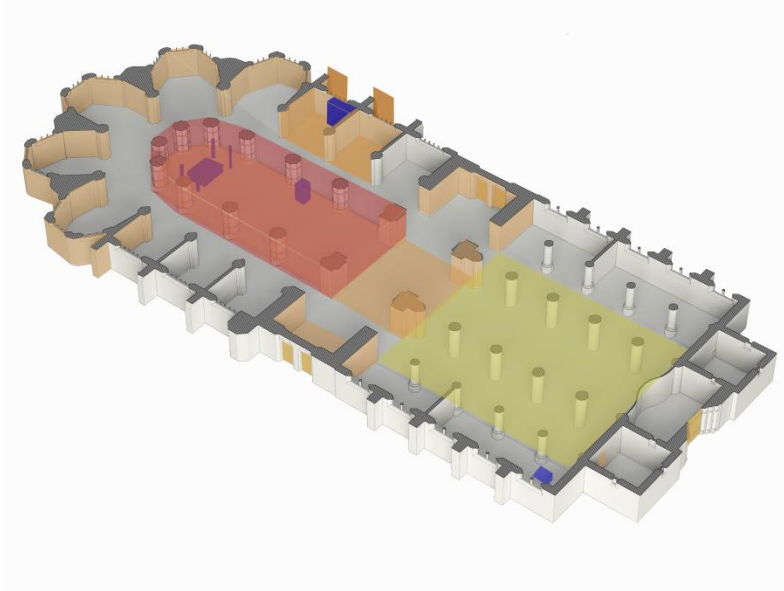
Restoration works 1585- beginning 1586 on floor-plan and perspective on exterior



<sup>900</sup> In the floor-plan of St James I have highlighted per period the restoration works took place. Orange/beige points to larger repairs in the period end 1584- beginning 1586, yellow to small replacements or repairs, purple is used for new furniture or work on movables in the church. The sources did not allow a more detailed shaping of the objects, and also volume and place are approximate and not exact.

## Restoration works 1586-1600 - the ordinary accounts<sup>901</sup>

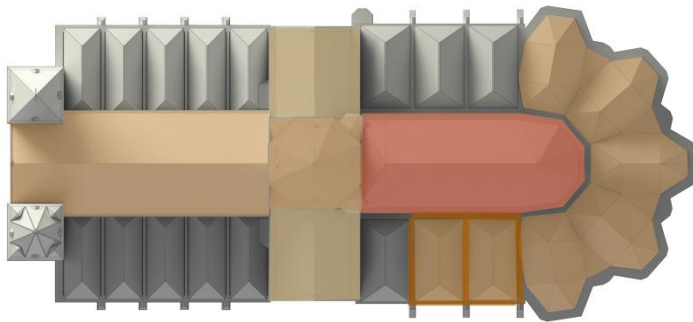
### First account 1583-1585<sup>902</sup>



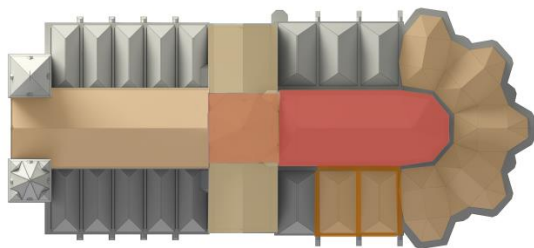
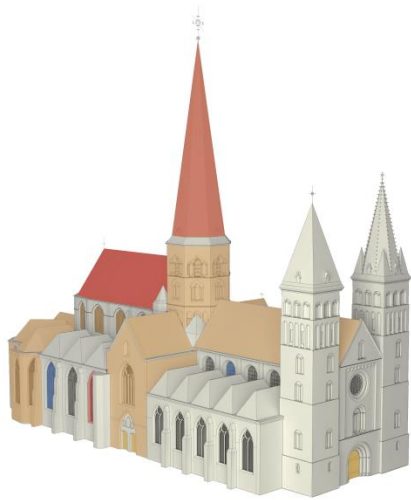
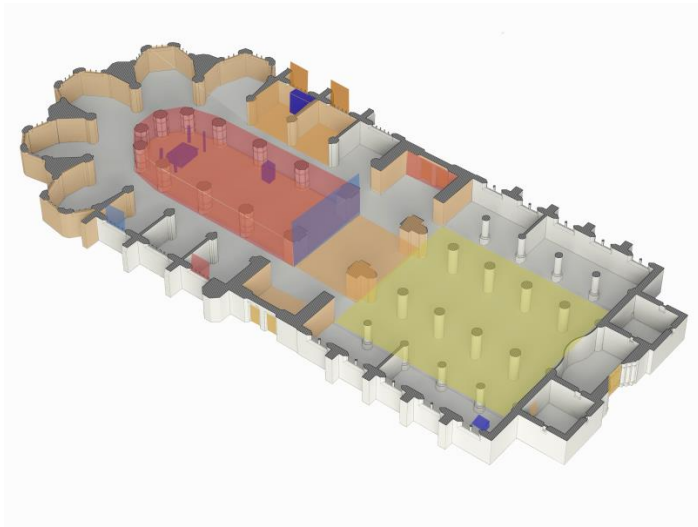
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<sup>901</sup> As we have seen above, the works recorded in the ordinary churchwarden accounts followed the restorations recorded in the extraordinary account of 1584-1586. The orange and yellow zones highlight thus the areas where already restoration works had taken place. New restoration work is marked in red or blue if the location was not clear. As some accounts are missing, these illustrations do not show all the areas where repairs took place. However, as the evidence is clear that somewhere in the period 1593-1995 a new tabernacle was built, a schematic visualisation for 1594-1595 is given, even though we miss the accounts in which it was probably recorded.

<sup>902</sup> The account covers 1583-1585 officially, but a closer look to the transactions recorded shows that most payments and work was from 1586.

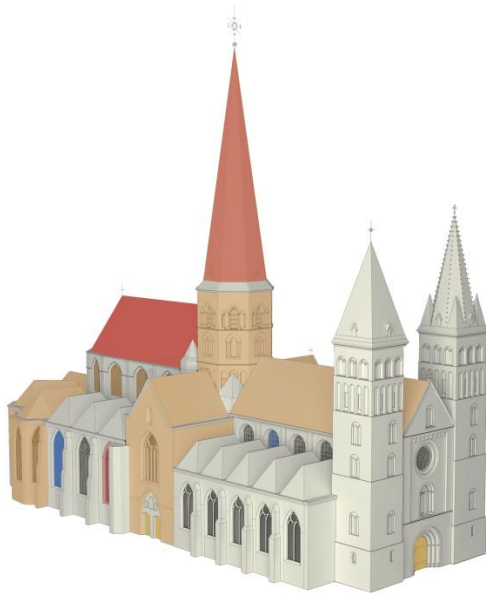


Account 1585-1586

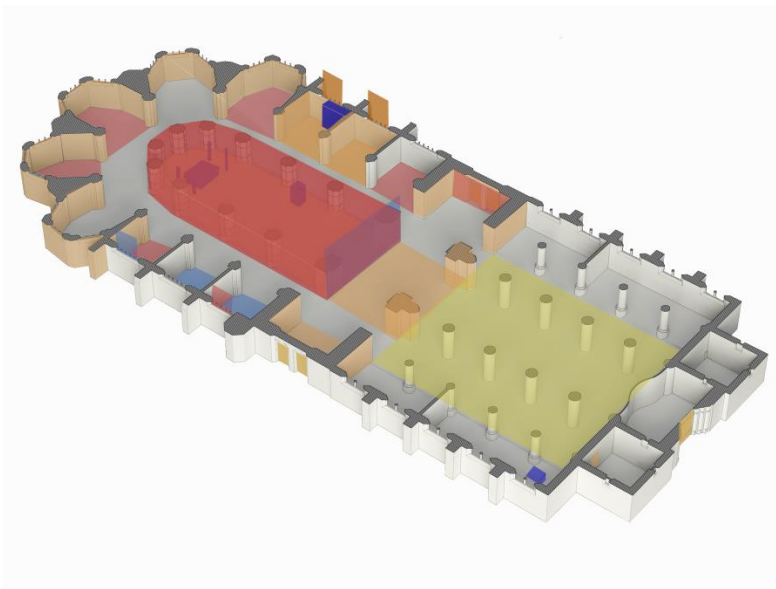




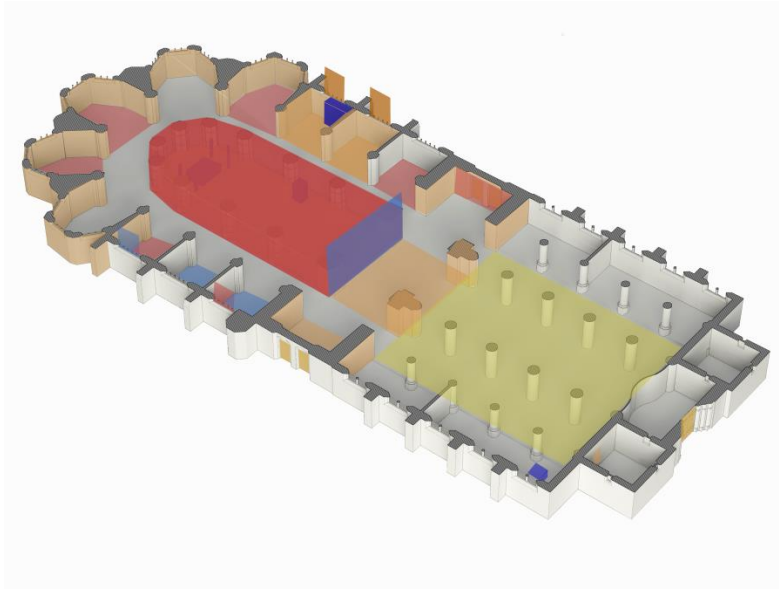
Account 1586-1587



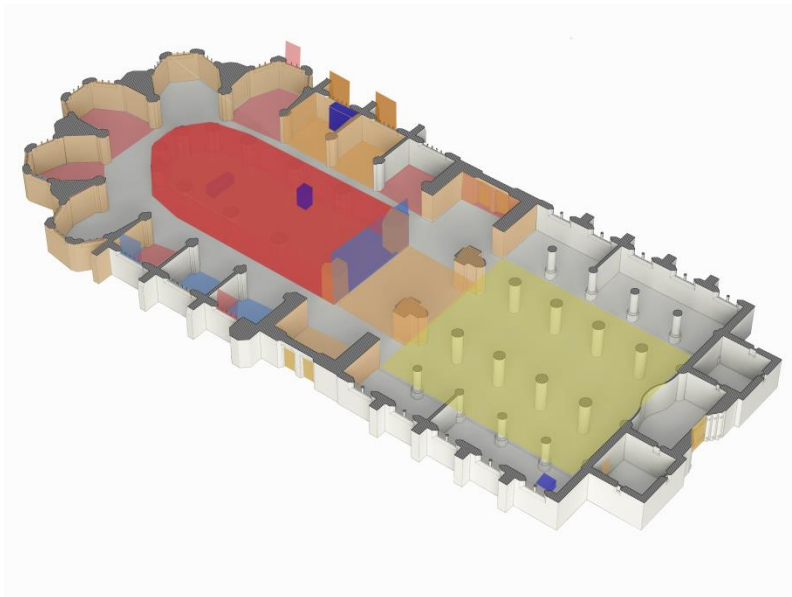
Account 1587-1588



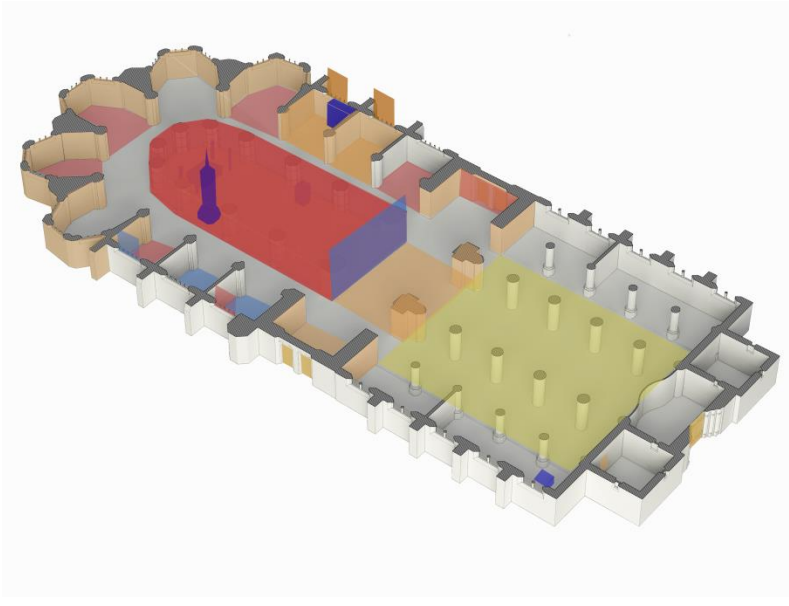
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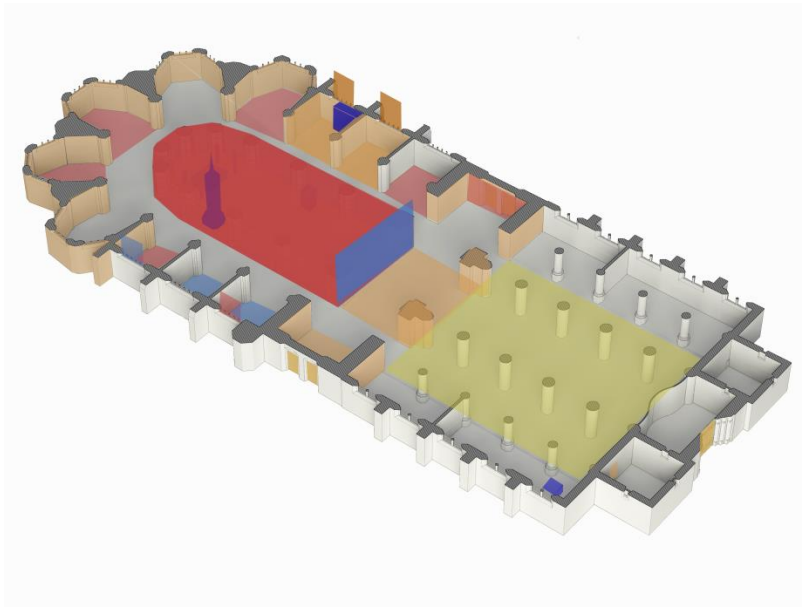
Account 1590-1591



Missing accounts period 1591-1596: tabernacle



Account 1598-1599



Account 1599-1600

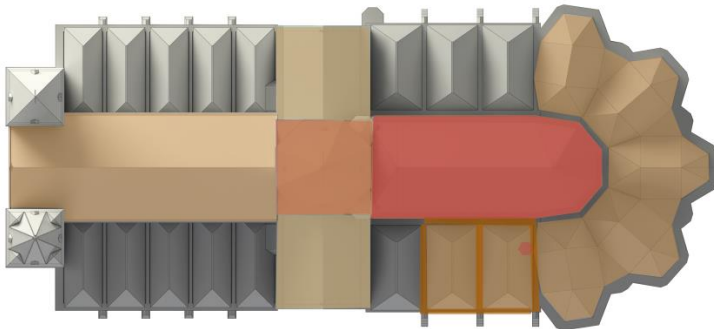
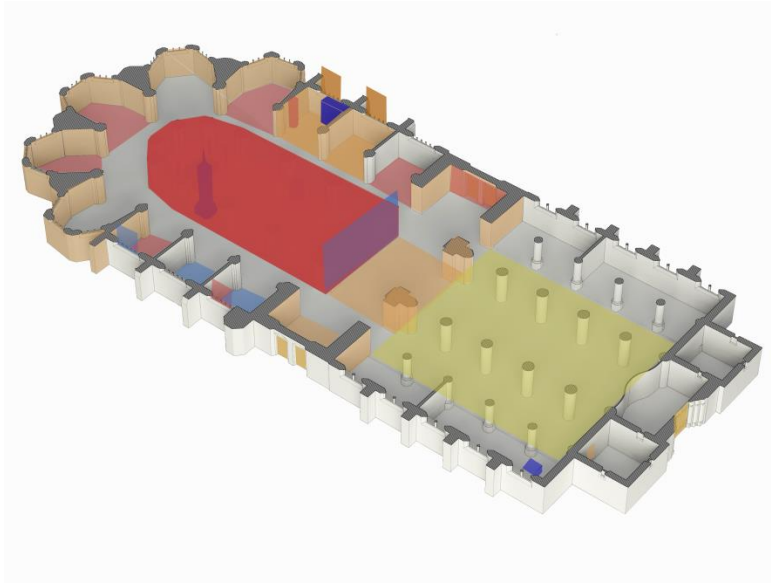




Table 5 List of parishioners with seating in St James 1560-1600

relation	first name	last name	public functions	place seating	payment	other
Wife	Jan	Van der Varent	member Raad van Vlaanderen schepen churchwarden	Onder den graedt vanden docxale	2 s.	
Wife	Ghyselbrecht	Terleers	churchwarden		Mits seker deughden in ghelaesveynsteren wilent der kercken ghedaen	De Potter VII 53
Wife	Adriaen	Meganc	schepen doctor in medecin churchwarden		2 s.	
Daughter	Raphael	Van der Sare	schepen churchwarden		Mits zekere aelmoesen in calcke der kercke gedaen	
Wife	Bussaert	Van Hembiese	schepen		Bezeten bij consente van mevrouw van Kethulle	
Wife	Marc	De Mil	collatielid		5 s.	Dambruyne 831, 426
Wife	Willem	van Auweghem	schepen churchwarden member HG bookkeeper SJ	From 1570: seating N	3s.	
Widow	Lucas	Cluetrijn	schepen ontvanger	From 1570: seating F	4s.	
Widow	Augustijn	Van den Tombeelee			12 gr.	
Widow	Christoffels	D'Auwe			12 gr.	
Widow	Gillis	De Cupere		From 1570: seating in nave next to altar Mary Magdalene	12 gr.	Name: Fransyne de Cleerc
Wife	Joos	Codde	onderbaljuw		12 gr.	
Wife	Jan	De Joncheere			4 gr.	
Widow		Van Kercvoorde			12 gr.	

Widow	François	Van Haute	family with members in magistracy	From 1570: seating D		
Wife	Lievin	Van Driessche				
	Catharina	Delrio		From 1570: seating across tabernacle, in front of chapel of St Margaret From 1600: seating chapel 'Causmaekers'	2s. 1 gr. 2s. 6 gr.	In 1602: seating is used by widow master Pieter De Prost
Wife	Laurens	De Groote	schepen churchwarden member HG			
Wife	Charles	Lespinoy	Heer van Kapelle of Ligne? churchwarden			
Widow	Philip	Van den Kethulle	schepen	A		
Widow	Geeraert	Triest	schepen churchwarden	B		
Wife	Zegher	Van der Straeten	member HG	C	4s. 2 gr./year	
Joncheer	Jan	Damman	schepen churchwarden	E		
Wife	Nicasius	Van Deynse	family with members in magistracy	O		
Wife	Franchois	Van der Sare	schepen	P		
Wife	Jacob	Loonen		Nave – near altar of St Germanus		
Widow		Vanderhaghen	Pieter: member HG bookkeeper church	Nave – near altar St John the Evangelist		
	Jacques	Van Berlaere	bookkeeper church	Nave – near pillar in front of altar St Cornelius		
Wife	Jacques	De Vriendt	Family with members as heads in crafts	R	2 s. gr.	
Wife	Joris	Van Wesemaele	churchwarden	G	2 s. gr.	
Wife		Van Sturtewaghen		Nave – near altar St John the Baptist – under the pulpit	memorie	
Wife	Jan	Van Hee		Nave – near altar St John the Evangelist	memorie	



Wife (and her mother)	Lieven	Goethals	member HG	F	5 s. gr.	
Wife	Joos	Quevijn	deken bakkers 1574	Nave - next to altar Mary Magdalene	s. gr.	
Wife	Guillaume	Van Hauweghem	churchwarden bookkeeper church member HG	Nave – near Holy Water font	Promise to repair seat which before was used by Elisabet vander Berghe weduwe van Jan vander Looven	



Table 6 List of deceased parishioners with the most elaborate funerals in St James 1561-1600<sup>903</sup>

Relation or title	first name	last name	public functions	account	church grave	pall	bell ringing	decoration	other	bequest
	Raphael	Van der Sare	schepen keure schepen gedele churchwarden	341	vrije	best pall for funeral second best pall (on grave for 6 weeks) anniversary pall	6	black hangings on high altar	<sup>904</sup>	
wife	Antheunis	Uuten Hove	schepen keure captain guard SJ member HG churchwarden	341					<sup>905</sup>	20s. gr.
wife	Jacques	Van Overbeke/Hueverbeke		342	vrije high choir	best pall			<sup>906</sup>	
mevrouw	Jan?	Van Dixmude	schepen keure churchwarden	343	vrije		5	11 ell linen	<sup>907</sup>	
	Jan	Vander Varent	member Raad van Vlaanderen churchwarden	344	vrije	best pall	5	hanging on high altar	“vrijen sepulture” anniversary <sup>908</sup>	12 ell linen + 6 s. 10 gr.
	Geraert	Triest	schepen keure schepen gedele son of Joos Triest	345	vrije	best pall	5	hanging on altars	<sup>909</sup>	
joncheer	Ghijselbrecht	Taccoen		345	side chapel of St Catherine	best pall	5/6	black hangings on three altars	<sup>910</sup>	

<sup>903</sup> In every churchwarden account available in the period 1561-1600, the most elaborate funerals were selected to be included in this table. Extensive bell ringing, decoration of the altars or an unusually expensive grave were indicators that aided this selection. The row indicating bell ringing is marked in grey from the moment the church of St James had lost his original bells. On the end of the table a couple of rows are marked in grey as well. The funerals in this zone surpass the period 1561-1600 and are not necessarily the most lavish ones, but are interesting to add for various reasons that will be explained in the analysis below.

<sup>904</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 341, fo 7 vo, 8 ro, 10 ro; Somers 41-43; SAG, Memorieboek Gent, 240, 247, 257, 279.

<sup>905</sup> SAG, Memorieboek Gent II, 263, 302; RAG, OKA, 341, fo 8 vo; De Potter, I, p 395.

<sup>906</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 342, fo 7 vo.

<sup>907</sup> SAG, Memorieboek Gent, 240, 247, 257; RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 343, fo 7 vo, 8 ro.

<sup>908</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 344, fo 7 vo, 8 ro, 8 vo, 345, 9 ro.

<sup>909</sup> SAG, Memorieboek Gent, 302, 332, 337; RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 345, fo 10 ro.

<sup>910</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 345, fo 10 ro, vo.

wife	Adriaen	Meganck	schepen gedele churchwarden doctor (medicine)	346	vrije	pall	4/5		2 pounds for grave <sup>911</sup>	
	Jan	De Bellemakere (fs Pieters/ de jonghe)	Deken oude kleerkopersnerin g 1536	348		pelleken (small pall)	5		<sup>912</sup>	
	Pieter	Van Ackere		348	vrije	pall	5		<sup>913</sup>	20 s. gr.
child	Geraert	Van opden Bosch		349	vrije – high choir	pall of linen		linen	5 s + 3 lb for grave for him and his relatives <sup>914</sup>	
wife	Joos	De Brune	schepen gedele member HG	349	20 s.	second best pall	5		<sup>915</sup>	5 s. gr.
	Herman	Van Steelant	schepen keure	349	5 s.	best pall pall for burial	6	black hangings on altar	<sup>916</sup>	
wife	Lucas	Cluetrijn	schepen gedele schepen keure ontvanger	351		best pall	6		<sup>917</sup>	
widow	Jan	Damman	Here van Oomberghe captain guard SJ schepen gedele schepen keure churchwarden	351	near chapel of Annunciation	pall	5		<sup>918</sup>	
widow	Philip	Van Kethulle	schepen Lord of Assche, Volkegem and Haverie	351	buried in Wondelghem	best pall	9	hanging on high altar	Her name is Françoise Deurnaghele <sup>919</sup>	

<sup>911</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 346, fo 9 vo.

<sup>912</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no, 348, fo 12, 13 vo, 14 vo; De Potter, VI, p. 515.

<sup>913</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no, 348, fo 12 ro, vo, 13 ro.

<sup>914</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no, 349, fo 14 ro, 15, 27 vo.

<sup>915</sup> SAG, Memorieboek Gent, 350, RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 349, fo 14 ro, 15 ro, vo.

<sup>916</sup> SAG, Memorieboek Gent, 314, RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 349, 14 vo, 15 ro.

<sup>917</sup> SAG, Memorieboek Gent, 283, 297, 322, 332, 350; RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 351, 11 ro, 12 ro.

<sup>918</sup> SAG, Memorieboek, 256, 260, 279, 289, 314, 332, 337, 350; RAG, OKA, 351, fo 11 vo, 12 ro; De Potter, I, p. 394.

<sup>919</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 351, fo 10 vo, 12 vo; De Potter, VI, p 70, 71, 109.

wife	Lauwereyns	de Groote	schepen gedele	351	vrije near altar "Our Lady" in nave	second best pall	4		<sup>920</sup>	
heere		Van Uutberghe		352	vrije	best pall (poorterspelle)	5	black hanging on high altar	<sup>921</sup>	
wife	Willem	Van Auweghem	schepen gedele schepen keure Churchwarden Member HG, bookkeeper	354	vrije near altar "Name of Jesus" in nave	pall for burial pall for 30 days	7/8	black hanging on high altar	<sup>922</sup>	
	Gillis	Van Havere		357	high choir	pall	-	hangings on three altars	Grave: 3 lb. gr. <sup>923</sup>	
wife	Willem	De Leghe	helps in church with gatherings	357	sepulture		-		<sup>924</sup>	3 lb. gr.
joncvrouwe		Van Kercvoorde		359	sepulture		6		<sup>925</sup>	2 lb. gr.
	Jacques	Vander Haghen	schepen gedele schepen keure	360	vrije	pall	7		<sup>926</sup>	20 s. gr.
	Willem	De Leghe	helps in church with the collections	361	Near Holy Sacrament		6		<sup>927</sup>	20 s. gr.
Heer	Adriaen	De Bave	parish priest SJ	361	high choir	best pall and pall for burial	9	<sup>928</sup>	grave: 2 lb. gr.	
	Adriaen	Haetse	lend money to parish	362	vrije	pall	8		<sup>929</sup>	

<sup>920</sup> SAG, Memorieboek Gent, 372, 373; RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 351, fo 11 vo, 12 ro.

<sup>921</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 352, fo 12 ro.

<sup>922</sup> SAG, Memorieboek Gent, 289, 322, 363; RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 354, fo 14 vo, fo 16 vo.

<sup>923</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 357, fo 18 ro.

<sup>924</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 357, fo 18 ro, 19 ro.; 348, fo 14.

<sup>925</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 359, fo 18 ro, 19 ro, vo.

<sup>926</sup> Dambruyne, Corporatieve Middengroepen, 806, RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 360, fo 16 ro, 16 vo, 17 vo.

<sup>927</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 361, 17 ro, 18 ro, vo.

<sup>928</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 361, fo 17 vo, 18 vo.

<sup>929</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 362, fo 15 vo, 16 vo; 360, 23 vo.

	Gillis	van Ackere	member HG	365	in church "beneden"	best pall	9		Purchase of grave stone "sarck" for 20 s. <sup>930</sup>	8 lb. gr.
wife	Baudewijn	Van Auweghen		366	in church "beneden"	best pall	9	hangings on high altar	<sup>931</sup>	2 lb. gr.
	Jannekin	Van Loonen	dochtere	366	Vrije in church "boven" in front of chapel of Heer Andries	best pall + "cleet" + small pall (pellekin) for burial	10		<sup>932</sup>	3 lb. gr.
	Pieter	Dhanins	schepen gedele schepen keure churchwarden	369	near chapel St Barbara	best pall small pall for 30 days			<sup>933</sup>	16 lb. gr.
mother		Martens (heere)	Maybe widow of late Jacob Martens, president Raad van Vlaanderen	369	choir	Best pall + small pall (cleen pellekin) for 8 days of mass	12	hangings on high altar	<sup>934</sup> Elisabeth Cabilliau?	
	Geraert	de Sceppere	schepen gedele schepen keure ontvanger churchwarden	369	vrije grave stone	best pall	12	hangings on high altar	Vrije sepulture + stone: 14 lb. gr. <sup>935</sup>	
kint	Pieter	Moens	churchwarden member HG	369	in the chapel of the basket makers	cleetkin			<sup>936</sup>	
mother and son	Pieter	Moens		371	In the chapel of the basket makers	pall pall for 30 days	12		grave : 2 lb. gr. <sup>937</sup>	
daughter	Geraert	de Sceppere	schepen gedele	371	vrije	cleetkin	9		<sup>938</sup>	

<sup>930</sup> RAG, OKA, St Jacobs Gent, no 365, 41 ro, 43, 47 ro, 54 ro.

<sup>931</sup> RAG, OKA, St Jacobs Gent, no 366, 44 ro, 46 ro, 54 vo.

<sup>932</sup> RAG, OKA, St Jacobs Gent, no 366, fo 51 vo, 52 ro, 56 ro.

<sup>933</sup> SAG, Memorieboek Gent, 289, 338, RAG, OKA, 369, fo 34 ro, vo.

<sup>934</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 369, fo 33 vo, 35 vo, 36 ro.

<sup>935</sup> SAG, Memorieboek Gent, 317, 338, 363; RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 369, fo 32 ro, 35 vo.

<sup>936</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 369, fo 33 vo.

<sup>937</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 371, fo 34 vo, 36 vo.

<sup>938</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 371, fo 31 ro, 35 ro. The same year also a nephew of Geraert de Sceppere was buried in a "vrije sepulture": no 371, fo 32 vo.

			schepen keure ontvanger churchwarden							
Heere	Marquis	Titarasguo	brouwer in 't casteel	371	near tabernacle	best pall	12		<sup>939</sup>	
mother	Anselm	Nieulant	Procureur- generael	371	choir	best pall	10	hangings in choir on three altars	<sup>940 941</sup>	2 lb. gr. for the grave
	Anselm	Nieulant	Procureur generael	372	choir	best pall	10	hanging in choir	<sup>942</sup>	2 lb. gr. or the grave
	Pieter	Arents	member HG churchwarden	372	In the chapel of the basket makers	pall for 30 days	11		<sup>943</sup>	3 lb.gr.
	Adriaen	Meganck	schepen gedele churchwarden doctor (medicine)	376			5		Some names are missing in the transactions. <sup>944</sup>	3 lb. gr (repairs) + 11 lb. gr.
widow	Pieter	Verhaghen	churchwarden member HG	383	20 s.	best pall, pall for 30 <sup>th</sup> ,		Hangings on high altar + 2 other altars	+ vane <sup>945</sup>	
son	Guilliaume	van Auweghen	member HG bookkeeper church	386		best pall	6	hangings on high altar	"uutvaert van mijnen soone" <sup>946</sup>	

<sup>939</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 371, fo 31 vo, 35 ro.

<sup>940</sup> P.P.J.L. Van Peteghem, *De Raad van Vlaanderen En Staatsvorming Onder Karel V (1515-1555)*, Rechtshistorische Reeks van Het Gerard Noodt Instituut 15 (Nijmegen: Gerard Noodt Instituut, 1990), 75–81.

<sup>941</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 371, fo 34 ro, 36 ro; Chris Verhaeghe thesis "De benoeming van de voorzitters en raadgevers van de Raad van Vlaanderen (1598-1633).

<sup>942</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 372, fo 30 ro.

<sup>943</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 372, fo 36 ro vo, 40 vo.

<sup>944</sup> SAG, Memorieboek Gent, 322; RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 376, fo 35 vo, 41 ro, 47 ro.

<sup>945</sup> Somers, 41-48, RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 383 fo 15 ro.

<sup>946</sup> RAG, OKA St Jacobs Gent, no 371 fo 1, 384, fo 1, 385 fo 1, 386 fo 15 ro.





## Summary

The recovery of the Catholic Church in the Southern Low Countries after the iconoclasm of 1566 and the Reconquista of 1584-85 took various paths, depending mainly on local circumstances. The focus on the parish of St James in Ghent brings nuance to our understanding of the early Counter-Reformation. While the older historiography generally considers the peaceful Twelve Years' Truce (1609-1621) as essential for the implementation of the Counter-Reformation in the Southern Low Countries, our case suggests that deep periods of crisis were accelerators in this process.

The outbreak of iconoclasm in 1566 brought the first shockwave and left the Low Countries in a state of unrest for several decades. Although there was little action taken against Protestantism in the late 1560's, the Ghent Catholics were not indifferent about their beliefs. Iconoclasts were condemned and punished as they had defied the social order and attacked the parish church. The church building and its most important architectural elements and objects were repaired relatively quickly and used again in daily services and annual feast days. This was only possible thanks to the gifts of parishioners.

The establishment of the Calvinist Republic in Ghent about a decade later – leading to a new outbreak of iconoclasm – would completely alter the socio-religious landscape. Ghent Catholics were actively repressed; Catholic material culture was damaged. The effects would last decades. Polarization was an inevitable consequence. When Alexander Farnese brought Ghent back under Habsburg rule in 1584, he also cleared the way for the restoration of the churches. 1584 was a turning point for Catholicism in Ghent. Despite the enormous damage to the church of St James, the demographic loss of a large portion of parishioners and the lack of a strong ecclesiastical organisation, the parish showed remarkable resilience. The great fervour with which at least a portion of the parishioners supported the church of St James is highlighted by the strong increase in income through gifts from parishioners and the immediate start of restoration work in 1584. These restoration works were clearly part of a Counter-Reformation from below; as one by one, the objects and structures contested by Protestantism were restored to their full glory,

Catholics were making clear claims about their beliefs, both after the first outbreak of iconoclasm in 1566 and after 1584.

Catholic Reform has proven to be a process of negotiation in which ordinary parishioners played a crucial role, and which was already developing in the 1560s. Parishioners were not necessarily seeking to alter Catholic practices or have Tridentine decrees implemented. On the contrary, there was overt opposition to specific changes demanded by the Council of Trent. But in an altered political and religious context, change was inevitable. This was mainly manifested in the material culture and devotional practices. The focus on Eucharistic devotion and the preference for increasingly elaborate funerals are concrete examples of how local Catholicism from below matched certain Tridentine ideas and contributed to the creation of an early modern Catholic identity.

## Samenvatting

Het herstel van de katholieke kerk in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden heeft na de beeldenstorm van 1566 en de *reconquista* van 1584-85 verschillende wegen gevolgd, afhankelijk van vooral lokale omstandigheden. De focus op de parochie van St Jacobs in Gent helpt ons beeld van de vroege contrareformatie te nuanceren. De oudere historiografie heeft vooral het belang van het vredige Twaalfjarig Bestand (1609-1621) op de ontwikkeling van de contrareformatie in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden beklemtoond. Deze casus toont aan dat ook grote crisissen belangrijke versnellers in dit proces zijn geweest.

De beeldenstorm van 1566 bracht een eerste schokgolf teweeg, waarna voor lange tijd chaos en onrust de Lage Landen in de greep hield. Hoewel de Gentse katholieken weinig actie ondernamen tegen het opkomend protestantisme, stonden ze niet onverschillig tegenover religie en traditie. De beeldenstormers hadden de sociale orde ondergraven en de parochiekerken aangevallen, zij werden onmiddellijk veroordeeld en bestraft. Vervolgens werd het kerkgebouw van St Jacobs samen met de belangrijkste architecturale elementen weer in ere hersteld, zodat er weer snel missen en jaarlijkse feesten in gevierd konden worden. Dit vlotte herstel was enkel mogelijk dankzij de giften van de parochianen.

Toen ongeveer een decennium later de Calvinistische Republiek van Gent werd opgericht zou het socio-religieuze landschap volledig veranderen. Er vond een tweede beeldenstorm plaats, Gentse katholieken werden in hun geloofsoefening onderdrukt en de katholieke materiele cultuur was verwoest. De effecten zouden decennialang nazinderen. Deze keer kon polarisering niet uitblijven. Toen Alexander Farnese Gent heroverde en een eind maakte aan de calvinistische heerschappij, kon het herstel van de kerken van start gaan. 1584 bleek een belangrijk keerpunt voor het katholicisme in Gent. Ondanks de enorme schade aan de St Jacobskerk, de demografische crisis als gevolg van grootschalige emigratie en een gebrekkige kerkelijke structuur, toonde de parochie een enorme veerkracht. Een substantieel deel van de overgebleven parochianen gaf blijk van hun steun voor de kerk via giften en de onmiddellijke aanvang van de restauratiewerken in 1584. Deze herstellingen waren duidelijk een onderdeel van de contrareformatie, want

één voor één werden de door de protestanten gecontesteerde objecten en ruimtes in ere hersteld. Katholieken maakten dus duidelijke claims over hun geloof, zowel na de eerste beeldenstorm van 1566, als na 1584.

Katholieke hervorming blijkt een onderhandelingsproces te zijn geweest dat al aan de gang was in de jaren 1560 en waarbinnen ook gewone parochianen een belangrijke rol speelden. Zij wilden niet per se katholieke praktijken veranderen of Tridentijnse hervormingen doorvoeren, in tegendeel, er was regelmatig oppositie tegen de invoering van bepaalde besluiten van het Concilie van Trente. Verandering was echter onontkoombaar in een veranderde politieke en religieuze context. Dit kwam vooral tot uiting in de materiële cultuur en in bepaalde devotionele praktijken. De focus op eucharistische vroomheid en de voorkeur voor steeds pompeuzere begrafenissen zijn concrete voorbeelden van hoe lokale ontwikkelingen in katholicisme hand in hand gingen met bepaalde Tridentijnse opvattingen en mee een vroegmoderne katholieke identiteit hebben helpen creëren.

